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THE
HISTORY OF PITTSFIELD,

(BERKSHIRE COUNTY,)

MASSACHUSETTS,

v. 2, pt. 1
FROM THE YEAR 1800 TO THE YEAR 1876.

COMPILED AND WRITTEN, UNDER THE GENERAL DIRECTION OF A COMMITTEE,

BY

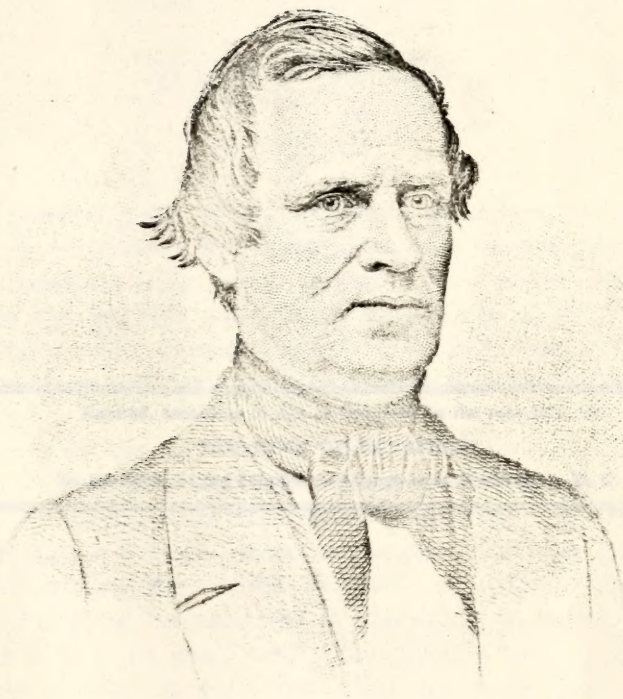
J. E. A. SMITH.

BY AUTHORITY OF THE TOWN.

SPRINGFIELD:
PUBLISHED BY C. W. BRYAN & CO.,
1876.

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Gen. A. Briggs

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PREFACE.

IN presenting the second volume of the History of the Town to the citizens of Pittsfield, we have to apologize for some vexatious delay, which, however, finds its compensation in the fact that some important portions of the work have been made correct, where it would have been impossible to do so had the story been finished at a much earlier date.

Our intention has been to give prominence to those events, enterprises, and institutions which have had an essential bearing upon the town's prosperity. We have also desired to do some justice to the men who have given it character, and labored for its good. In some instances, lack of material has rendered it impossible to accomplish this as fully as we could wish; and possibly we may have sometimes erred in judgment; but we have sincerely aimed to be impartial, and believe that substantial justice has been done.

The original plan of the work was to make the earlier portions more full than the later: indeed, to give but a brief skeleton of recent affairs; it being exceedingly difficult to make contemporary history satisfactory to those who have taken part in it. We have in a few instances departed from this course, for reasons which will suggest themselves to the reader. And now, in order that the size of the book may not exceed reasonable limits, we have been obliged to omit accounts of several gentlemen, and of enterprises of recent date which had already been prepared.

For the same reason we make this presentation of our work very brief, trusting that the charity of our fellow-citizens will suggest to them an excuse for such faults as they may discover, and for what may appear to them unfortunate omissions. We may, however, claim that the Record here contained is one of which any town may be proud ; and one which will show that few towns have contributed so much to the general history of the country, in all its departments.

Pittsfield, July, 1876.

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HISTORY.

HISTORY OF PITTSFIELD.

CHAPTER I.

PITTSFIELD, A. D. 1800.

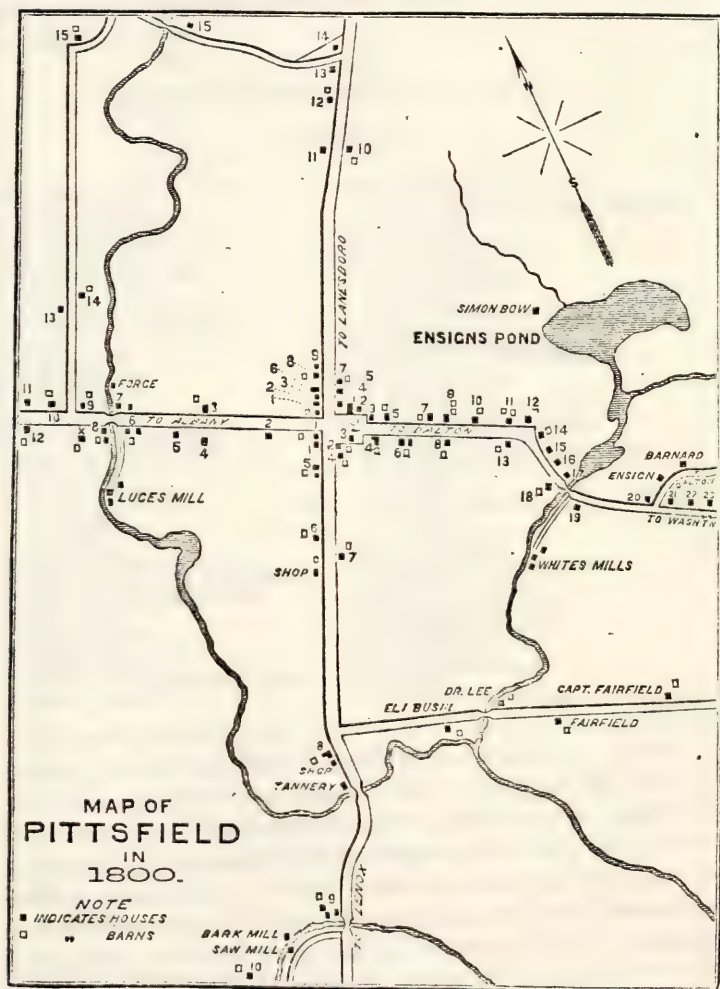
Preliminary — The village mapped and described — Old houses still standing — Excellence of the joiner-work — Buildings which have been destroyed — The village witling — Anecdote of the Berkshire hotel — Shade trees, flower-gardens and shrubbery — Popular appreciation of the beautiful in nature — Stores — Major Israel Stoddard — Influence of method of first settlement on distribution of population — Streets, roads, traveling and transportation.

IN the first volume of this work, we related the history of the township of Pittsfield from the time when it was the hunting-ground of the Mohegans, until about the year 1800, reserving, however, a few points, chiefly concerning manufactures, agriculture, and political affairs, subsequent to the Shays rebellion, in order to treat of them more consecutively in connection with their fuller development.

In resuming our task, our first endeavor will be to paint, or at least to map, the town as it stood at the close of the eighteenth century; to portray some of its leading citizens; to depict its social and domestic life; to describe its physical condition in regard to agriculture, commerce, manufactures, and the means of intercommunication with the world beyond the mountains which surround it; in fine, to render the reader as familiar as we may with the Pittsfield of seventy-five years ago.

We select this period in which to gather up the scattered threads of our narrative, and to arrange them for continuation, because the year 1800 was a grand landmark in the history of the town, as well as of the country; when, with the change in

political domination, there began a more gradual, but quite as decided, change in social views and habits, a new departure in the direction of milder laws, and a lessened reverence for prescriptive absurdity and wrong entrenched behind antiquated forms. In



town-affairs a more than usual number of new men began, about that time, to become prominent; new industries were introduced, and new interests began to develop themselves.

We shall attempt to build our description of the central village

by the aid of a map compiled from the best authorities which we have been able to consult; the description of travelers who visited the town at that time; the vivid memories of venerable citizens; the faithful delineations in the local and advertising columns of contemporary newspapers, and the guidance of nearly contemporary maps and plans.

MAP OF PITTSFIELD, A. D. 1800.

REFERENCES.

Road to Lanesboro (North street).

1. Darius Larned.
 2. ———, goldsmith.
 3. Wilcox, shoemaker.
 4. Blacksmith shop.
 5. Jonathan Allen, store.
 6. Hiccock, sexton.
 7. Thomas Allen, Jr.
 8. Jared Ingersoll, tavern.
 9. Shed.
 10. Joseph Allen.
 11. Fothergill.
 12. Colonel Easton.
 13. Joseph Hale.
 14. Stephen Mead.
 15. Thomas Brown (negro).
- #### *Road to Albany (West street).*
1. James D. Colt.
 2. Slaughter-house.
 3. Dr. Timothy Childs.
 4. Widow Cook.
 5. Azariah Root.
 6. John Snow.
 7. George Randow.
 8. Joel Dickinson, house and shop.
 9. Zebediah Stiles Langworthy.
 10. Siah Stiles.
 11. Dr. Kitteridge.
 12. Rufus Allen.
 13. William Miller.
 14. Dr. Timothy Childs, farm-house.
 15. John U. Seymour.

Road to Lenox (South street).

1. J. & S. D. Colt's store.
2. John Stoddard's (store and post-office).
3. Hay-scales.
4. Stallham Williams.
5. Ashbel Strong.
6. William Hollister.
7. Ezekiel Root.
8. Captain Daniel Weller.
9. Major Dan. Weller, house and tannery.
10. Enoch Weller.

Road to Dalton (East street).

1. Meeting-house.
2. Town-house.
3. P. Allen's printing-office.
4. John Chandler Williams.
5. Rev. Thomas Allen.
6. John Strong (Lemuel Pomeroy).
7. William Meilen.
8. Thomas Gold.
9. Joshua Danforth (store and post-office).
10. Joseph Larned.
11. Perez Graves.
12. Captain Jacob Ensign.
13. Oramel Fanning.
14. ——— Wadsworth.
15. Septimus Bingham.
16. Eli Maynard.
17. Tannery.
18. Ebenezer White.
19. Z. Burt.

The road upon which the residences of Dr. Lee, Eli Bush, and Captain Fairfield are laid down is Honasada street. A forge is laid down upon the map, north of the crossing of the river by West street, but it had been removed previous to the year 1800.

The village thus mapped is described by the Duke de la Rochefoucault Liancourt, a French exile who traveled through the United States in 1795-7, as "A small but neat town, containing several large and handsome houses of joiner's work." President Dwight, in his travels, speaks of it in similar terms, and we have evidence of the excellent joiner work in a considerable number of houses which were erected previous to 1800, and are still among the better class of dwellings; some of them among the most luxurious mansions of the town. We will enumerate most of them,

specifying the principal changes which have been made in their exteriors, so that the reader familiar with the town as it is in 1875, may gain some idea of what it was in 1800.

The building designated as No. 6 East street, was erected by Captain John Strong, of revolutionary fame, and was kept for many years by him, and by his son of the same name, as a tavern. In the year 1800, when it was purchased by Lemuel Pomeroy, it was a two-story, gambrel-roof house, very similar in appearance to the homestead of John Chandler Williams which stood next west of it. Mr. Pomeroy substituted a third story for the gambrel-roof attic; and his son, Mr. Robert Pomeroy, who succeeded him, has since built a large wing on the south-east corner.

The John Chandler Williams' homestead, known to the present generation as the Edward A. Newton house, then stood on the corner of Park square and East street. It was erected by Colonel James Easton, who intended it as a residence for his son; but, owing to his pecuniary difficulties, it was sold about the close of the revolution, and before its completion, to Mr. Williams, by whom it was finished. In order to make room for the courthouse, it has been removed a little east, to the corner of Wendell avenue; but its external appearance has been little changed.

The square mansion, No. 5 South street, was built in 1792, by Hon. Ashbel Strong, by whose heirs it was owned until 1862, when it was purchased by George and David Campbell. It has been subjected to a few alterations, but its appearance is not essentially altered.

The Dr. John M. Brewster homestead, No. 10 East street, built by Colonel Simon Larned, previous to 1790, remains quite unchanged. The large, square house erected by Thomas Gold,¹ and designated No. 8 East street, is now the residence of T. F. Plunkett; a mansard-roof has been added to it, and a more elaborate portico takes the place of that across which "Tall poplar trees their shadows threw;" it has otherwise been carefully protected.

¹ After the death of Mr. Gold, this mansion became the summer residence of his son-in-law, Hon. Nathan Appleton. Mr. Appleton's daughter became the wife of Henry W. Longfellow, and the poet gave a new charm to her home in the ballad of "The Old Clock on the Stairs;" the subject of which stood on the broad landing of the staircase which ascends from the spacious entrance hall. The description of the house in the poem is literally accurate, and its story is equally truthful. We may add that "the old-fashioned hospitality," which "used to be," still is.

The meeting-house, which faced the park, is now the gymnasium of Maplewood Institute, where it retains, externally, all its architectural features except the belfry, for which an observatory has been substituted.

Outside the district covered by our map, the large, square flat-roofed mansion, now the residence of J. R. Morewood, was built by Henry Van Schaack, in 1781, with extraordinary care and liberal expenditure; and was for many years much the best-built edifice in the town. The wooden walls were lined with brick, and the carpentry exhibits a perfection of skill which excites the admiration of modern workmen who are called upon to make alterations in it. Repairs are rarely needed. It is little changed except by the removal of the broad chimney and the old-fashioned balustrade which surrounded the roof.

Mr. Van Schaack removing to his native place, Kinderhook, in 1807, sold his house in Pittsfield to Elkanah Watson, a gentleman of very similar tastes, and the founder of the Berkshire Agricultural Society, who occupied it until his removal to Albany in 1816. It was then purchased by Major Thomas Melville, who resided in it until 1837, and was succeeded by his son, Robert Melville. For some years previous to its purchase by Mr. Morewood, in 1851, it was kept as a boarding-house, and numbered among its guests Henry W. Longfellow, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and President John Tyler.

The Van Schaack mansion stands upon the east side of South street, a mile below the park. On the adjoining estate, upon the south-east, and about a quarter of a mile distant, stands the broad-chimneyed, hospitable-looking old dwelling, built some years previous to 1800, by Captain David Bush, under whose rule, and that of his son, it was a famous inn. It faces upon Wendell street; and now, but slightly changed in its general outline, it is the summer home of the family of the late Allan Melville. The old place had the good fortune, in 1852, to be purchased by Herman Melville, then in the freshness of his early fame. Mr. Melville named it Arrow-Head, from the Indian relics found on the estate, and made it a house of many stories; writing in it, besides Moby Dick, and other romances of the sea, the Piazza tales, which took their name from a piazza built by the author upon the north end of the house, which commands a bold and striking view of Greylock and the intervening valley. "My Chimney and I,"

a quaintly humorous essay, of which the cumbersome old chimney—overbearing tyrant of the home—is the hero, was also written here, as well as “October Mountain,” a sketch of mingled philosophy and word-painted landscape, which found its inspiration in the massy and brilliant autumnal tints presented by a prominent and thickly-wooded spur of the Hoosac mountains, as seen from the south-eastern windows, at Arrow-Head, on a fine day after the early frosts.¹

Of a still earlier date than Arrow-Head or Broad Hall, was the cottage erected about the year 1767, by Woodbridge Little, Esq., and occupied by him until his death in 1813. It still stands near the crossing of the Boston and Albany railroad by Beaver street, and is little changed. It is owned by Mr. Frederic C. Peck.

In the west part still remain, almost precisely as they stood nearly a hundred years ago—save time’s mellow coloring—four houses. That built by Captain William Francis, and in which that influential citizen and ardent patriot lived and died, is still owned and occupied by his descendants. That built by Robert Francis, is now owned by Edmund French, and that of Rev. John Francis, in which the Baptist church was re-organized, and where many of its earlier services were held. That erected by Mather Wright was long occupied by the late Linus Parker.

In the same vicinity is still another interesting and well-preserved specimen of the dwellings of the fathers; a square, flat-roofed house, the second story slightly projecting over the first. It stands on West street, south of Lake Onota, and is still known to the older residents of the town as the Jesse Goodrich tavern, although the builder, who gave it his name, has long since passed away, and the sign that used to swing before it long ago ceased to creak. Mr. Goodrich was a worthy man and a thorough builder, and his tavern is one of the best-preserved relics, being unchanged externally, and showing within the solid old-fashioned wainscoting and balusters. Even the boards which, at a much later date, divided the once-popular ball-room into smaller apartments, are of a breadth marvelous at this day.

Among the houses which have disappeared, there was, of course, a larger proportion of inferior dwellings than among those which remain; for the more nearly perfect the material and

¹ Herman Melville, and his brother, who succeeded him in the ownership of Arrow-Head, were nephews of Major Thomas Melville.

workmanship, the greater was the probability of preservation. In 1800, however, very shabby and uncomfortable abodes were, on the main streets, extremely rare.

There was no mansion fully equal, in all respects, to Major Van Schaack's; but some were nearly so, and many would still be called handsome and commodious, except by those who deem all the modern improvements absolutely essential to comfort.

By far the greater number of the more modest dwellings have perished, and we have neither space nor data to reconstruct them; but we will try to recall a few of the more conspicuous.

On what is known as the "Berkshire corner" of North and West streets, was a building of considerable size, with a gambrel roof; but it had undergone, in parts, some alterations, precisely of what character there are different reports. It was occupied as an inn by Captain John Dickinson, Darius Larned, Captain Joseph Merrick, and by Solomon L. Russell and brother. In 1798, the landlord was Captain Dickinson, and his daughter, Parthenia, afterwards Mrs. Curtis T. Fenn, was born in it at that date. In 1800, it was kept by Darius Larned. In 1810, Captain Joseph Merrick, an earnest federalist, was the host and proprietor, and having, as the democrats alleged, refused to provide them a Fourth of July dinner, they determined to erect, and did erect, on the opposite side of the park, a handsome hotel of three stories, one of whose glories was a spacious hall for the accommodation of political meetings, public dinners, and dancing parties. Now, Captain Merrick's inn had also a hall, in its gambrel-roof, which had long been occupied by Mystic Lodge of Free Masons, and for various other purposes of such a room. Captain Merrick was determined not to be eclipsed in so important a point by his new rival; but he kept his own counsel, and no one suspected his purpose until, one fine morning, Major Butler Goodrich, with whom he had made arrangements, appeared upon the ground with a large force of men and prepared material, and so rapidly was the work done, that before rumor could gather a curious crowd to speculate and criticise, a spacious third story had taken the place of the gambrel-roof. Captain Merrick, his brother Masons, and the federal public generally, had a hall of which they were proud, and which came in excellent good play when the Washington Benevolent Society was shortly after organized.

The Messrs. Russell having succeeded Captain Merrick in the

proprietorship of the inn, it was accidentally burned in 1826, and gave place to the still more favorite Berkshire House, which they erected the next year.

On the opposite corner, formed by South and West streets, was the two-story, gambrel-roof building—a mate, when it was built, to the inn—which was occupied, in 1800, as a dwelling-house by James D. Colt, Jr. One or two years afterwards, Mr. Colt erected the residence south of his store, now owned and occupied by George W. Campbell, and was succeeded in his previous home by Hon. John W. Hulbert.

No. 3 East street, assigned on the map to Allen's printing-office, was a gambrel-roof cottage, which had been built by Rev. Thomas Allen, as a store for his son Jonathan, who commenced his business life in it. It had been the printing-office of three newspapers previous to the *Sun*. In 1809, it was removed to North street. It will often re-appear in our story. Next south of it, the parsonage of which a description and view were given in our first volume, was still the home of the village pastor.

On Honasada street, the Long House, built by Colonel William Williams, and which has been previously described,¹ continued in good preservation, and it was owned and occupied by Joseph Shearer, a thrifty citizen, who had thriftily married the colonel's widow.

Of the same model was the Ingersoll tavern, famous as a barrack and a depot for prisoners in the Shays rebellion. This noted hostelry stood in the rear of the present south corner of North and Depot streets, facing east, with an ample court-yard in front. In much later years, when it had been abandoned by the Ingersoll family, it was known popularly as "Fort Necessity," partly from the tradition of its warlike uses, and partly because families removing to Pittsfield, in days when there were no superfluous dwellings, were compelled to pass their novitiate in this crazy edifice until a better home could be built or provided for them. The well, whose water is sadly deteriorated by impure surroundings, is still known as the "Fort Well."

Dr. Timothy Childs, in 1800, lived in the square flat-roof dwelling, which still stands, on the hill opposite the present Boston and Albany railroad depot, a part of the ministry-lot bought

¹This description erroneously gave it a gambrel-roof. It was angular.

by him of the town in 1774. Attached to it as an L, is the gambrel-roof cottage which he built soon after the purchase.

In the year 1800, the dwelling-houses of Pittsfield were divided in about equal proportions between the gambrel, angular, and flat-roofed. Of those which first succeeded to the log huts of the earliest settlers, the greater number had the gambrel-roof, and were of one story, although the meeting-house, the school-house, the parsonage, the "Long House" of Colonel Williams, the residence of Colonel Oliver Root on West street, and some others were angular.

The flat-roofs began to come in fashion about the close of the revolution, and in 1800 were still the modern style. They were often surrounded by a railing of ornamental balusters, the posts of which were surmounted by urns or globes. Fences of a similar style enclosed the ample court-yards of the square mansions which generally sustained this class of roof. About the date of the incoming of this style of domestic architecture, Henry Van Schaack brought from Hartford, in his saddle-bags, the slips from which grew the Lombardy poplars introduced into Berkshire county; and this soon became a favorite shade-tree,—if a bundle of twigs, so stiff, so straight, so tall and slender, and so little umbrageous, could properly be styled a shade-tree. The Lombardy poplar is inseparably associated with our ideal of the statelier homesteads in the era we are endeavoring to depict. Before the year 1800, they had found a place in many of the court-yards of Pittsfield, and we may safely introduce them, in all their youthful freshness, keeping guard, like so many grenadiers, over the residences of Henry Van Schaack, Rev. Mr. Allen, John Chandler Williams, Dr. Timothy Childs, Ezekiel Root, and the first James D. Colt, as well as, doubtless, over many other homes which have kept no memory of their faithful service.

They had, however,—especially around the tasteful homes of Thomas Gold and Henry Van Schaack—their newly-planted rivals, in the more broad-leaved and generous button-woods, destined, not like the poplar to outlive the popular favor, but to perish of premature blight when their venerable and ample shade was most dearly prized.

A taste for the cultivation of flowers and ornamental shrubs had already manifested itself, although far from universally or even commonly. In the very first interval of rest after the

French and Indian wars, we found the garden of Colonel William Williams adorned with, at least, the pink, the carnation and the gilly-flower. In 1800, the flower-beds of Pittsfield, which were generally placed conspicuously in the front court-yards, exhibited, in addition to the noble old favorites of Colonel Williams's garden, the hollyhock, the sun-flower, the morning-glory, the sweet pea, the marigold, and others upon whose petals there still linger, in many memories, the roseate glow, the balmy aroma, and the dewy freshness of life's morning; and which are, therefore, held in the heart's esteem above all the wealth of the conservatory.

Of the flowering shrubs, the principal were the rose and purple lilac; of flowering climbers, now and then, a honeysuckle; of non-flowering climbers, the woodbine and the native grape.

As yet, native shade-trees received little attention from the gardener, and wild flowers none at all; but, as nature planted them, they served well the place of all others with the mass of the people. Few, if any of the hundred-acre home-lots, which stretched across the center of the township, from east to west, were, as yet, entirely denuded of their groves. On many, considerable relics of the original forests still flourished. Within a few rods of the park, on West and South streets, were thickly-wooded hemlock-swamps.¹

Beyond the settling-lots, a large, perhaps the greater, portion of the "squares" into which the "commons" were divided in 1759-60, were still uncleared. With the elms, oak, pine, maples, chestnut, and other trees of these woods, were thickly intermingled the sweet-brier, the azalea, the mountain-ash, the sumach, the wild cherry, the moose-wood, and the white thorn, so close to every house that although their beauty must have often held the rapt gazer in charmed admiration, none thought of transplanting them.

It would be most unjust, indeed, to censure, as without appreciation of the beautiful in nature, or even as without a keen sense

¹Mrs. C. T. Fenn remembers, when a young girl, parting often with a favorite companion—the latter being compelled to pass through the "swamp-road," on South street, on her way home—that she waited, calling to her by way of encouragement, until she reached the opening on the other side, now the head of Church street. Report located wolves in the wooded recesses, afterwards the garden of Rev. Dr. Todd, from which fearful cries were heard at night. A tangled swamp extended from near the west side of South street to the present line of the Housatonic railroad, and from West street nearly to the present West Housatonic street.

of her charms, all those who thought it but a vain labor to bring together exotics from the ends of the earth, when not only the fair, wild, flowering shrubs, which we have named, were scattered in profusion close around their homes, but the gorgeous laurel, with its glossy foliage, the trailing arbutus, luxuriously delicate of hue and fragrance, the fairy-tinted and quaintly-shaped lady's slipper, the columbine in her harlequin garb of red and yellow, the gentian with her fringed ruff of deepest blue, the asters, white, blue, purple and orange, the violets and *houstonia cerulea* clouding the earth, the clustering anemone, the adder's-tongue, the wake-robin, the wild pink, and other forms of floral loveliness, peeped from every thicket and spangled every field; when the myriad plumes of the purple orchis, and the pickerel-weed, invaded the waters of every stream; and, higher up their banks, the scarlet splendor of the cardinal-flower dazzled the eye; and, most beautiful of all, on the bosom of every lake floated the pure white lily of the waters.

In painting the homes of the fathers, we must surround them with a thousand forms of native grace and beauty which have withdrawn from our own; and it would be a libel upon the blood we inherit, to declare that they in whose veins it ran seventy-five years ago, because they did not seek to augment the charms with which untutored nature sought to delight them, were therefore insensible to their influence. No less would it be a libel upon history, when we remember how the early discoverers exhausted hyperbole in their description of the new world's glories, to say that the children of these same men, when they came to dwell among these same glories, were struck with an inane blindness which prevented their enjoyment of them. Not even the privations, unintermitted toil, and frequent suffering of pioneer life could have effected that transformation.

No, we may depend upon it, that the descendants of the generation to which belonged Drake and Raleigh, Hudson, the Cabots and the other voyagers of glowing story; and the ancestors of the race who claim Bryant and Longfellow and Lowell, did, with tender and true appreciation, enjoy the splendors of field and forest which the voyagers who went before them, and the poets who came after, celebrated with like fervor. And that appreciation was none the less genuine because it was casual, unstudied, and not often eloquently expressed; the golden thread

interwoven by nature with a life otherwise of somewhat rude and somber texture, not that inwrought by culture with warp and woof of silken leisure.

In making these natural flower-gardens and their sheltering grove thus prominent in our picture, we do not, then, unduly magnify what the men and women of 1800 regarded lightly; but give its just place to a feature which went far to satisfy their craving for the beautiful, and contributed much to relieve the barren aspect of a town of generally-unshaded streets, and court-yards for the most part unadorned by shrub, or vine, or flower; even if, as was most likely to happen, they were not deformed by unsightly objects.

Nor must we forget another source which brought its aid to the same end; the apple orchards, which, planted near almost every house, afforded, all summer, a fair and cheerful sight; but in the season of blossoming, thick flecked the scene with clouds of splendor rivaling the most fleecy that float in the skies of June. Such, and with such surroundings of trees, shrubbery and flowers, were the abodes of the people of Pittsfield, about the beginning of the nineteenth century. Their places of mercantile business were few and unpretending, but respectable, and such as were usually found in flourishing market-villages.

On East street, at the corner of Second, was the two-story gambrel-roof store of Colonel Joshua Danforth; its gable-end facing East street. A little below was a similar store but of only one story, occupied by Graves & Root.

On the corner of North street and Park place with the gable-end and entrance facing on the latter was the store built by Jonathan Allen, in 1798; a plain, neat building with an angular roof. Next north, on the site of the Allen block was the small one-story steep-roofed "medicine-shop," built in 1796, by Dr. Timothy Childs. On South street, facing the west end of Bank row, was built about this time by J. D. & S. D. Colt a handsome wooden store, large for its time, of two stories with an angular roof. It still stands, having been removed to West Housatonic street. Opposite the Colt store on the corner of Bank row and South street, was a similar store which was built by Hon. Ashbel Strong, and occupied by his brother-in-law, John Stoddard.¹

¹ Major Israel Stoddard, the noted loyalist of Pittsfield revolutionary story, and son of Colonel John Stoddard, the Northampton "great New Englander,"

From the Stoddard store to the house of John Chandler Williams, was a vacant space.

From the foregoing hints and outlines the reader, with a little aid from imagination, will perhaps be able to gain a tolerably correct idea of the village of Pittsfield, in the year 1800.

In examining the map, it will be noticed that dwellings are much more thickly scattered along the streets running east and west than upon those intersecting them at right angles; and the same difference would be observed if it had been extended to embrace the whole of the original settling-lots. There were two causes for this. First, the great highway between Boston and Albany ran through East and West streets. But secondly, and chiefly, it arose from the mode in which the lots were originally laid out. There were, it will be recollected, three tiers of hundred-acre farms, lying side by side and extending from the east to the west through the center of the township. One of these tiers reached the whole length of the town, while that north of it fell a mile and a half short of the Dalton border, and that upon the south something more than two miles short of the Hancock line; the three ranges being separated from each other by roads seven rods wide. They were also intersected by a road, seven rods wide, running nearly through the center of the township from north to south, and now known as North and South streets, and in the east and west parts by other roads. The extreme width of these

joint proprietor with Colonel Wendell, and Edward Livingstone, of Pontoosuc, died in 1872, of consumption, aged forty-one. He lies buried with his widow and several of his children on the eastern slope of Pontoosuc Hill in the Pittsfield cemetery; where his grave is marked by a large old-fashioned tombstone, bearing this exceedingly-apposite epitaph:

"In life, uninfluenced by the breath of fame,
The great, the true, the just, thy constant aim;
Praised or not praised, in death affects thee not,
By whom remembered or by whom forgot.
A heap of dust is all remains of thee;
'Tis all thou art, and all that we shall be."

His daughter Mary, the grand-daughter and namesake of the "Honored Madam May," of provincial polite society, and a lady equally worthy of honor, was married in 1792, to Hon. Ashbel Strong. And in this connection there comes to us a traditional anecdote, which, at once, illustrates the decline in the reverence which the people had bestowed upon the wealthy and magisterial classes, and introduces a character now rarely met, but which, seventy years ago, made merriment in the streets of almost every New-En-

tiers of settling-lots at the point where they were intersected by North and South streets, and where the tiers were complete, was only about six hundred rods. The length of the central tier which lay south of East and West streets, was something over six miles; that of the others about four miles. Now, the lots had a frontage from east to west of eighty rods, while their depth was two hundred rods. It will be seen that only three of these lots could lie upon each side of North and South streets, while one occupied each eighty rods of each side of the six miles of East and West streets, and the four miles of Honasada street.

The terms of the grant required a house to be built upon each of these sixty-three lots within a brief period after the first settlement; and, although the terms were not strictly complied with, and sometimes two lots were consolidated, yet it was not many years before there was an average of one house to every eighty rods on the last named streets; making an unusually-compact agricultural settlement. On the other hand, the "commons," or the territory outside the settling-lots, retained by the original proprietors, embraced a strip one and a half miles wide on the south side of the town, and another two and a half miles wide on the north; and were with a trifling exception not open to occupation until 1760, and, even then, instead of being offered in oblong parcels of moderate size, suited to the means of the young farmers and leading by their form and arrangement, as well as by positive

gland town, the village rhymesters, who, with coarse and often caustic, wit, played the part of court-jesters to the "Sovereign people." Generally they were somewhat weak or disordered in intellect; but, whether so or not, they were always licensed.

Mr. Strong was fourteen years older than his wife, and in his days of courtship, one day meeting one of this witless-witty class, he challenged a display of his powers. The response was the following doggerel:

"Old Ashbel Strong,
He stubs along
Up to his farm and fodder;
The people say,
Who live that way,
He's courtin' Molly Stoddard."

Plain, and rather irreverential, "Molly," observe, and no longer "Honored Madam." But the Honorable suitor is said to have "stubbed along" without further parley. The curt record of the marriage styles the bride Mrs. Polly Stoddard. John Stoddard, who kept a store on Bank row, was a brother of Mrs. Strong, and was born in 1773.

agreement, to the erection of farm-houses somewhat after the order of a village street—the “commons-lands” were divided into squares of from two hundred and thirty to three hundred acres each; some of which long remained the property of those to whom they fell by the partition of 1760.

Some of the original owners, such as Colonel Wendell, Major Israel Stoddard, Captain Charles Goodrich, Israel Dickinson and the Partridges, reserved large farms for their own use. But, with these exceptions, the owners of the squares were generally well inclined to sell their lands in lots convenient for the purchaser, with no more restrictions than prudence dictated for the prevention of awkward and unsalable remainders. And probably the majority of the farms sold were of very moderate dimensions. Some contained no more than fifty acres. But the new-comers—not restricted, like the sixty pioneers to a confined section, not like them compelled to take the poor lands with the good, and no longer attracted to a defensible vicinage by the fear of lurking savages—selected their homes wherever the fertility of the soil, convenient water-power, neighborly associations, the course of the highways, the state of their purse, and an infinitude of other considerations, led them.

But to return to the system of roads, in Pittsfield, which was distinguished for its regularity. The road from Lenox to Lanesboro, of which North and South streets were a part, extended through Pittsfield nearly in a straight line, passing through the present site of the high-school house, and over the hill north of Maplewood Institute, and that west of Pontoosuc Lake. East and West streets, as now, extended from a point half a mile east of the park, in a straight line to the Hancock borders. Owing to the swamp east of that point, the highway diverged thence south-east, through Water and Elm streets. These intersecting roads, practically only two, may be considered the trunk, or base, of the whole system. From North street, about half a mile north of Maplewood, a street turned a little to the north-west and passing near the present entrance of the cemetery, joined and continued through Otanaque street; forming the avenue by which the people of the North woods, and several of the forge neighborhoods, reached the central village. Waheconah street was not yet opened. Farther north a road, crossing the outlet of Pontoosuc lake, wound along its west side. From South street, Honasada

street—one of the originally-reserved roads—was actually opened eastward to the Dalton line. Westward, there continued to be an unmade portion until the line reached a point near Ocoola village, whence it was completed to the foot of the mountain. Beyond the river, South Mountain street wound along the base of the hill from which it takes its name. From Otaneague street, to the western extension of Honasada street, three roads ran north and south crossing West street. From West street, also ran Onota street, north to Seymour's iron forge. On West street again, east of the river, Mill street led south to Luce's mill. From Honasada street, Shearer's lane ran south along the east side of the farm which had been owned by Colonel Williams; and from the same street a road ran south and south-west, to "Rock mountain;" now known as the Sikes district, famous for its very hard and peculiarly-stratified granular quartz.

Northward from Elm street, extended Dickinson street, or the east road to Lanesboro. There were some other roads in various parts of the town; but the lack of recognizable landmarks would render an attempt to describe them unintelligible to most readers.

The roads by which the people of Pittsfield reach the great market-towns which they were accustomed to visit, have undergone material alterations. Travel towards Boston was through East and Elm streets, and thence by a street now partly discontinued, past the Woodbridge Little place, to the Dalton line, where it met the Worthington turnpike to Northampton. The road to Albany ran as at present through New Lebanon. The road to Hudson wound through South street, and South Mountain street, and thence by Barkersville, Richmond, and West Stockbridge. It is many years since the Pittsfield portion of this route has been used commonly as a thoroughfare. In 1800, however—Kinderhook and Hudson being the market-towns most convenient for Pittsfield trade and the landings where Berkshire merchandise, coming up or going down the Hudson, was generally transhipped, and where Berkshire travelers took sloop to New York city—a greater amount of mercantile travel passed over the Richmond road than over any other in Pittsfield. This road could also be reached from the west part, by any of the streets leading from West to West Honasada street. But how slowly pre-eminence was gained by, or accorded to, the present business center of the town is shown by the fact that the great convenience and reduc-

tion of distance afforded to it by the opening of West Housatonic street was not obtained until 1825, nor in its best form until 1827; long struggles in town-meetings being required to accomplish it.

The earliest communication with the towns in southern Berkshire, and in Hampshire county, and with Hartford and other Connecticut towns, was through Wendell street. The majority of the first settlers probably entered Pittsfield by this road; those from Hampshire county, coming by the road from Blandford to New Marlboro. But in 1800 the most direct road was through South street, and the travel upon it was probably greater than upon any other except the Richmond road.

These avenues of communication were imperfectly constructed and often out of repair. Frequently, for considerable distances, they passed through dreary patches of wood. Corduroy roads were not yet dispensed with in crossing swamps. The vigorous traveler, therefore, preferred to make even long journeys in the saddle; and it needed that wagons should be stoutly built in order to encounter the rudeness of the highway. The trials of the teamster's patience and muscle were severe; but luckily, at brief distances, substantial taverns offered refreshment for man and beast. Nevertheless, the best relief was offered by the season of winter with its gliding roads; and it was enjoyed to the full.

CHAPTER II.

POPULATION—EMIGRATION—NEWSPAPERS—POST-OFFICES.

[1787-1800.]

Census of 1800—Increase and decrease of Berkshire towns—Causes of emigration—Anecdote of Phillips Merrill—Early newspapers—American Centinel—Local items—Advertisements—Influence upon agriculture, manufactures and morals—Publishers' troubles—Post-riders—Scarcity of paper—Berkshire Gazette—More post-riders and the first post-office.

BY the census of 1800, the population of Pittsfield was 2,261, distributed more uniformly than in more recent periods through what had been the original settling-lots, but much more sparsely in what had been the "commons." During the preceding nine years the town had become the most populous in Berkshire; the others having a population of over one thousand, being Williamstown, 2086; Sheffield, 2050; Sandisfield, 1857; New Marlboro, 1848; Great Barrington, 1754; Tyringham, 1712; Adams, 1688; Lanesboro, 1443; Cheshire, 1325; Lee, 1267; Stockbridge, 1261; Hancock, 1187; Otis, 1102; Richmond, 1044; West Stockbridge, 1002.

By the census of 1791, the population of these towns was: Pittsfield, 1992; Williamstown, 1769; Sheffield, 1899; Sandisfield, 1581; New Marlboro, Great Barrington, 1373; Tyringham, 1397; Adams, 2040; Lanesboro, 2142; Lee, 1170; Stockbridge, 1336; Hancock, 1211; Richmond, 1255; West Stockbridge, 1113.

The increase of population in Williamstown was very much due to the incorporation of Williams College in 1793. The decrease of Lanesboro, Adams and some other towns arose, in part at least, from the setting off of a part of the territory which for the purposes of the census, had been included with them.

But from the year 1791, far onward into the present century there was a constant and exhaustive drain upon the population of the entire county, by emigration to enticing farming regions

then newly opened in western New York and in Ohio. Previous, indeed, to the year named, we find in the Pittsfield newspapers, advertisements of lands, not only in Ohio and New York, but in Vermont and Canada. In the *Chronicle* of April, 1789, Silas Goodrich advertised lands in several Vermont towns to be sold on liberal terms by auction "at the gaol-house at Great Barrington." In July, 1789, Mr. Leonard Chester published a long and glowing advertisement of lands in Canada, "to be confirmed" as to title "by himself and Lord Lanaudiere"—probably one of the provincial manor-lords.

Possibly, Mr. Chester may have allured to his patent, some Tory with an obstinate hankering for the shadow of royalty; but we have no information of any such case, and the status of the Berkshire loyalists was not at that time such as to render them impatient of the republican regime. The virgin territory of Vermont was more attractive, and there was a large emigration to that state. Indeed in Rutland county, a new Pittsfield, modeled after the old Berkshire home even to its park and elm, arose under the auspices of the grand old pioneer, Captain Charles Goodrich.

But, although by no means trifling in numbers, the emigration to Vermont was small compared with that which set towards western New York. As early as 1788, companies were formed for emigration to the Genesee valley. In 1790, the glowing advertisements of the Ohio company began to appear; and, from that time on, speculators and land-agents used all the allurements which they so well know how to apply, to entice the Berkshire farmers from their decried acres to the extolled fertility of the West. These enticements were met by those who loved the old home, or were interested in preventing its depopulation, and who presented counter arguments and statistics as forcibly as they could. For many years this wordy warfare went on, the friends of migration portraying the newly-opened regions as a very paradise; the woods full of all manner of game, the soil prolific beyond precedent, and the climate delightful and healthful; while those desirous of retaining population denied all the attractive qualities of western New York and Ohio, with still greater exaggeration. The reports from those who had emigrated were equally conflicting. Now a letter would overflow with the account of marvelous crops, sparkle with stories of adventure, and revel in

reminiscences of achievements in hunting; and now another would be filled with stories of disease and death. Many returned with doleful confessions of homesickness. Among the latter was Mr. Phillips Merrill, who, in 1813, when a youth of perhaps twenty years, was sent by his father, Captain Hosea Merrill, to build a saw-mill upon a tract of land which he owned in the Genesee valley. He spent the summer in executing his task; and on his return, his father told him that a Mr. Clark who owned the farm at the south end of Pontoosuc lake, wished to exchange it for the Genesee lands and saw-mill; but that, intending to give them to himself, he had refused. "Father," said Phillips in reply, "I have lived in that country all summer, and built you the best saw-mill in York State, but I wouldn't spend my life there if you were to give me the whole country. The sun rose every morning in the west, and there was nothing at all homelike about it." The result was that Mr. Clark removed to Genesee, and Mr. Merrill grew rich by intelligent farming and shrewd business management in Pittsfield.

There were many with temperaments unsuited for pioneers, whose experience was like that of Mr. Merrill. But for all this, the Genesee valley was of marvelous fertility; the western reserve of Ohio was incontestably a country to be desired; the farms of Berkshire were fast becoming exhausted as wheat producers; the advertisements of the emigrant companies, and the—not entirely gratuitous—eulogisms of editors and correspondents, in their descriptions of the West, grew more frequent and more glowing. The tide of western migration swelled in volume. Paulding's description of the Yankee abandoning his half-finished shingle palace, to push forward with his tow-headed brood—the vanguard of empire—to a log cabin in the West, was no caricature. It found its original upon every highway which led towards the promised land.

The *Pittsfield Sun* of June 2d, 1801, attributes the decrease of population in many Berkshire towns to the emigration to "the new lands in Genesee, and other parts of New York, especially the Chenango purchase." "Settlements," said the *Sun*, "which cover whole townships in several counties in New York, are composed almost entirely of emigrants from Berkshire county."

The State of Connecticut, to which, in the settlement of the ownership of public lands, the western reserve in Ohio had

fallen, presented extraordinary inducements to settlers by offering the fertile lands of that territory in exchange for farms in New England. Her agents were busy in Berkshire county, and succeeded in effecting many exchanges of this sort. It is not many years since that State owned lands thus obtained; among others that which surrounds Lake Ashley, the source of the Pittsfield water-works, and that in which lies the valuable bed of granular quartz, from which the Lenox Glass Company obtain their supply of sand.

To this migration, Pittsfield, although not depleted like some of her sister towns, contributed many of her valued citizens; valued, although not always successful in business. Those who had long struggled under that burden of debt and mortgage, which we endeavored to describe, among the causes of the Shays rebellion, abandoned their long deferred hope of retrieved fortunes in the old home, for fresher promise in new fields; and generally not in vain. We find in the brief but suggestive records of the church, touching stories of the gift to members—who had been prosperous and prominent, but who had become indigent through intemperance—of the means of removing to new homes in Genesee, where they might begin life anew. And it is pleasant to find the families, thus gently and not unkindly thrust out into the wilderness, in the next generation among the most thriving and honored in the very garden of the Empire State.

The habits of intemperance, thriftlessness and dissipation generally, which existed in the years immediately following the revolutionary war, still continued, although diminished by the healing power of time. Of some other peculiarities which at this period led to the impoverishment of the unwary, we shall speak in treating of its social and moral aspects. It is sufficient here to say that they were more numerous and more powerful than they now are, especially as affecting those classes of society which, by their decorous requirements, throw the most effectual safeguards around their members.

It will be seen that, in addition to the restless desire of bettering their condition by change of location, the allurements of distant promise, and impatience of ill-success at home, which continually push on population towards the Pacific, there were powerful stimulants to migration during the earlier years of the century, which no longer exist, or are greatly diminished.

We return to the consideration of the means which enabled Pittsfield—notwithstanding the loss of the county courts, and the drain made by the West upon her population—to show an increase of two hundred and sixty-nine souls between the census of 1791 and that of 1800. It is worthy of remark that all the towns through which ran the great highways crossing Berkshire from the east to the west gained in population. But the chief agencies which advanced Pittsfield were agriculture, commerce and manufactures—not an uncommon combination, and the same which still prevails. But the order of their precedence has become reversed; it now being manufactures, commerce and agriculture. We will consider them, for the sake of convenience, in still another order, and in connection with another influence which had an extremely beneficial effect upon the prosperity of the town.

This influence came from the early newspapers of the town; of which the first was the *American Centinel*, published by E. Russell. The first number of this sheet was dated December 1, 1787, at which time there were only two other newspapers in Massachusetts west of Worcester, the *Hampshire Herald*, commenced at Springfield in 1782, as the *Massachusetts Gazette*, and the *Hampshire Gazette*, whose long and honorable career, not yet ended, began at Northampton in 1786.

All the information we have regarding the *Centinel* is derived from a single tattered copy of the second number, which is believed to be the only relic of the paper in existence. It is printed on a sheet ten by eighteen inches in size, and the greater portion of its space is occupied by two or three prosy essays. The advertisements are very few, but still the most interesting portion of the paper. The editor, however, evidently intended to make his columns when under way more readable, as is indicated by the ambitious couplet which he placed at their head :

“ Here you may range the world from pole to pole,
Increase your knowledge, and delight your soul.”

But alas, the *Centinel* here vanishes from view, having no doubt very soon met the fate fore-shadowed in its second number, in which Mr. Russell “returns his thanks to those gentlemen who expressed their anxiety to have the printing-office in Pittsfield, by engaging him to print a certain number of papers; and

begs leave to inform them that he has a large number of papers on hand for which he has yet received nothing, and which he wishes those gentlemen to call for, according to agreement. If agreements are not fulfilled, the *Centinel* must stop."

Mr. Russell had found the same experience of printers' patrons which Benjamin Franklin had met before, and many another since.

The *Centinel* was succeeded by the *Berkshire Chronicle*, which occupied the same office, and probably used the same type and press. Its birth seems to have followed hard upon the death of its predecessor, the first number being published May 8, 1788, "by Roger Storrs, near the meeting-house,"—the little, old first meeting-house, it should be remembered, which stood upon East street, in line with the printing-office; there being, as yet, no "park."

The first issue of the *Chronicle* is missing, but most of the numbers, from May 15, 1788, to June 17, 1790, are preserved.

For the first thirty numbers the new paper was only twelve inches by eight in size; but with the thirty-first number, December 19, 1788, it was enlarged to the respectable dimensions of eighteen inches by ten.

Throughout its course the *Chronicle* exhibited marked editorial skill, tact and spirit. The motto,—

"Free as the savage roams his native wood,
Or finny nations cleave the briny flood,"

gave promise of something not quite so ponderous as the essays of the *Centinel*; and the expectation excited was satisfied by able moral, political and economical articles, relieved by lighter sketches, anecdotes and verses, and by the foreign and domestic news of that exciting period, all prepared in compact and readable form. The local columns, although not so full as we could wish them for our present purpose, were more so than those of later Pittsfield journals. The advertisements came from all parts of the county, although few were from the extreme southern towns. Many of them were of a character which shows that the cost of advertising must have been small; but no tariff of prices was given, and it is probable that special bargains were made in each case; legal, mercantile and other classes of advertisements paying different rates,—a practice of which some relics remained, until very recently, in the newspaper business of the county.

The editor manifested a lively interest in that great advance of the industrial arts which was then beginning under the ardent, laborious and intelligent efforts of the best and most patriotic minds in the country. In the first number of his paper, he gave emphatic notice that "the printer would be happy to receive and publish any communications of improvements in the arts, especially those of agriculture and manufactures;" and the essays which he did publish, although not original, were not far behind those of later days.

In the number for September 14, 1789, were published eleven excellent rules, by the celebrated Dr. Rush, of Philadelphia, for the conduct of a newspaper, and, however it may have been in regard to some of the others, the editor faithfully followed the ninth: "Let the advancement of agriculture, manufactures and commerce be the principal objects of your paper. A receipt to destroy the insects which feed upon the turnip, or to prevent the rot in sheep, will be more useful to America than all the inventions for destroying the human species which so often fill the columns of European newspapers." Mr. Storrs, however, seems, as a practical editor, to have very well known that, whatever may be the principal aim of a newspaper, that aim will be best attained by devoting a considerable, perhaps the greater, portion of its space to other subjects. A paper devoted entirely to the discussion of the gravest objects, as recommended by Dr. Rush, would have soon met the fate of Mr. Russell's *Centinel*, and left its aims to such help as they could get from technical essays. The *Chronicle*, on the contrary, with its racy variety, must have been a welcome visitor in every home; a pleasant companion to the apple-basket and cider-mug, in the broad and cheery blaze which illumined Berkshire firesides in those old winter evenings; while withal, its usefulness was enhanced rather than impaired by its genial traits.

But newspaper-publishing in 1789 had its troubles and its difficulties among the Berkshire hills. There was but a single post-office in all Western Massachusetts—that at Springfield, to which all mail-matter for the present counties of Hampshire, Berkshire, Hampden and Franklin was sent. Post-riders, not employed by the government but a sort of private mail-carriers, obtained the letters and newspapers of their customers from the Springfield office, and, riding their several routes on horseback,

distributed them at the doors of those to whom they were directed. The same important agents took the local newspapers from the printing-offices, and delivered them to subscribers. Often they purchased the papers from the publisher, and dealt directly with their customers at their own risk. In regard to the circulation of his paper, and the collection of his dues, these agents were a great convenience; but as the rider from Berkshire only visited Springfield once a week, and the chances for his delay by storms or otherwise were great, the facilities for obtaining news from abroad might well be considered small and precarious. Even in winter the post generally rode his circuit on horseback, but so bulky was the currency of the interior at this period that an occasional trip with some vehicle was indispensable. Thus on February 13, 1789, "Alvin Wolcott, post-rider," informed his customers that he "proposed, the next week, to go his circuit in a sleigh, for the purpose of transporting the pay which shall be ready for him at that time." The printer, like the merchant and others, was obliged to take the greater part of his dues in produce; and he was very glad if it was in linen rags—as yet cotton was not in general use—for which he also offered to exchange good writing paper. There was great scarcity of printing paper, and the newspapers, whose publishers experienced great trouble from this source, constantly urged housewives carefully to save their rags; an economy which they seem to have learned with difficulty. So great was the dearth of paper that in March, 1789, Mr. Storrs gave notice that, for this reason, he "would for the present publish only half a sheet, but as soon as these obstacles were removed, would print a half-sheet extraordinary."

The scarcity of paper was not the only difficulty with which Mr. Storrs had to contend. On the 15th of May, 1789, he, at the close of his first volume, thanking his "subscribers for their past favors," informed them that the paper would be suspended for two or three weeks, during which he asked a payment of old dues, and an addition of new subscribers." "It must," he observed, "be apparent to every person of discernment that the establishment of a new and precarious business, in an infant country, must be attended with many difficulties and expenses unexperienced in those more populated and matured;" for which reason he hoped his customers would more readily comply with his request. He had engaged a supply of paper, and the diffi-

culty of obtaining it being removed, he expected in future to serve his customers without interruption. The publication was resumed and continued, at least until June 17, 1790. The number printed on that day was the fifty-first of the second volume. Whether it was continued longer is uncertain, but the last issue showed no signs of flagging. In politics the *Chronicle* was federal, but moderate, although earnest. In morals it opposed intemperance, and the still more fashionable vice of gambling; including lotteries, although their advertisements were found in its columns, and they were patronized and conducted then, and for many years afterwards, by the gravest personages in church and state.

The influence of this excellent journal upon the town must have been large, and its citizens should enroll the name of Roger Storrs among those entitled to their grateful remembrance.

The *Chronicle* was succeeded by a paper whose very name is forgotten, but of which we have a vague tradition as published for a time by a Mr. Spooner, who removed to Windsor, Vermont.

On the 18th of January, Nathaniel Holly, Orsemus C. Merrill and Chester Smith issued the first number of the *Berkshire Gazette*, a sheet of nineteen inches by twelve, bearing the mysterious motto, "Man is man, and who is more." Sixteen numbers of the *Gazette* are preserved, and represent a respectable newspaper. But we miss the pleasant and varied miscellany of the *Chronicle*, its practical essays upon arts, agriculture and morals, and especially its lively interest in home affairs. The only information we are able to gather from it concerning local matters is derived from the advertisements. But the increasing violence of party spirit is clearly shown in the political articles.

Mr. Merrill withdrew from the firm in June, 1798, and Mr. Holly, in March, 1799. Mr. Smith, in assuming the sole charge of the paper, made the subscription-price, delivered at the office, one dollar per annum, "as previously;" one dollar and fifty cents if delivered by carrier or post-rider. Advertisements not exceeding twelve lines were inserted three times for one dollar, and three weeks longer for thirty-eight cents; longer advertisements in proportion. This was the first time that the price of subscription or of advertising was mentioned in the Pittsfield newspapers.

The *Gazette* ended with the year 1799, and in the following October, J. D. & S. D. Colt called upon those indebted to its

publisher, for payment, by an advertisement in the *Pittsfield Sun*, which then succeeded to the printing-office; but by no means to the political principles or the ephemeral existence of its predecessors.

Four newspapers were thus printed in Pittsfield between the years 1787 and 1800. And small as their pecuniary success seems to have been, their influence upon the town for good was not slight. They attracted attention to it as a business and political center, extended intelligence among its people, and fostered all its best interests.

Among the incidental benefits which they bestowed were increased postal facilities. When the *Chronicle* was established, not only was there no post-office in the county, but the post-riders were very irregular in their circuits, their visits being sometimes at long intervals. But in January, 1790, Mr. Storrs, with excusable pride, announced that "the printer of the *Chronicle*, ever endeavoring to furnish his customers with the earliest intelligence, had engaged a post to ride *weekly* from his office in Pittsfield to Springfield on Mondays, and return on Wednesdays, with the papers published in the different states of the Union; when matters of importance [brought] by them will be published in the *Chronicle* on Thursday, and immediately circulated to the several towns by the different post-riders."

The local newspapers in 1790 furnished their own postal facilities, and the people could obtain their letters and other mail matter by the agencies thus provided. The first post-office in Berkshire was established at Stockbridge in 1792, probably through the influence of Hon. Theodore Sedgwick, of that town, who was the first representative in Congress from the district. The second was at Pittsfield, in 1794; and it is fair to infer that the publication here of the newspaper had its influence in obtaining it. A post-office was established at Great Barrington in 1797, and at Williamstown in 1798. There was no other in the county until 1800, when one was opened at Lenox, which had been made the shire town in 1786, for its "central position." Lanesboro, in 1801 obtained the same favor.

CHAPTER III.

AGRICULTURE—MANUFACTURES—MERCANTILE AFFAIRS.

[1787-1805.]

Farming universal—Deterioration of soils—Agricultural teachings—Products—Price of land—Prices of stock and farm products—Fulling-mills—Iron forges—Tanneries—Potasheries—Oil-mills—Nail-factory—Early mercantile business—Trade by barter—Patriotic merchants—What goods were sent to market—Joshua Danforth—Simon Larned—John B. Root—Trade in 1798-1805.

AGRICULTURE.

COMMERCE and manufactures were, even prior to the nineteenth century, no mean elements in the business of Pittsfield. Still agriculture was the chief employment of its people. Even those engaged in other avocations were generally also practical farmers. The clergyman was an enthusiastic, skillful, and personally-industrious farmer. The lawyer, the merchant and the physician each owned and cultivated his farm. So did the clothiers, the tanners, and most, or all, of the iron-masters.

Of the character of the cultivation bestowed on the fields, we can aver with some positiveness that it was not altogether so rude and unintelligent as is often represented.

Secretary Charles L. Flint thus epitomizes the history of the deterioration of New England soils: "The soil [originally] was rich in mould—the accumulation of ages—and did not require very careful cultivation to secure an abundant return. But years of constant cropping exhausted its productiveness when other lands were taken, to be subjected to the same process. The farmer raised wheat, year after year, upon the same land, till the soil became too poor, and then he planted corn; and when it would no longer grow corn he sowed barley or rye; and so on to beans."

Owing to the later settlement of Berkshire, this process of de-

terioration, on a greater portion of its soil, did not pass much beyond the first stage before it was arrested by intelligent manuring. Nevertheless the unthrifty practice of constant cropping without the application of fertilizers was general in Berkshire quite as late as 1800. We have the diaries of three Pittsfield farmers of good repute, between the years 1777 and 1798, and there is no mention in them of any artificial enrichment of the soil, although the dates of other farm operations are minutely given. Indeed, it is said to have been a question with some whether it were better to remove an old barn to a new location, or haul away the accumulations around it, which were considered merely a worthless nuisance. Any use of the valuable agents provided by nature for the nourishment and renovation of the soil was contemned by the masses as mere fancy farming,—good enough for gentlemen of leisure, but a waste of labor for hard-worked men.

Of course, the cultivation of wheat upon soils thus drained of all wheat-producing elements, grew unprofitable, and was abandoned. But before the second step had been taken in the downward path, more intelligent views began to prevail. And the germs of this reform were sown, not only long before the institution of the Berkshire Agricultural Society, but more than ten years before the opening of the nineteenth century. The *Chronicle*, on the fifteenth of May, 1788, began the publication of a series of essays upon agriculture, copied from a work then just issued in New York; and they extended through ten numbers of the paper, filling from one and a half to three columns in each issue. "The success of farming," said the writer, in introducing his subject, "depends principally upon the collecting of manure; on a proper change of crops; on good tillage, or ploughing the ground properly, and keeping it clean; on the choice and management of stock; and on the management of the orchard and its produce." "Upon these articles" he "made some notes, chiefly collected from Mr. Young's Farmer's Tour through Europe, published in 1771." These notes contained axioms and instructions, not essentially differing from those given in the most recent agricultural text-books. Great economy and thoroughness in the saving of manures was emphatically urged; directions were given for composting; the value of liquid manures was explained, and some modes of saving that of the stable were pointed out—among

which the simple expedient of absorbents was, however, not mentioned. Of the rotation of crops it was said: "A succession of the same sort of crops will speedily exhaust the best land. For this reason the skillful farmer changes his crops every year." The order of succession most approved was that practiced in Norfolk, England: "1, turnips; 2, barley, with clover feed; 3, clover; 4, wheat." Some preferred in the third and fourth years clover, and in the fifth wheat. Others found the following formula extremely beneficial: "1, turnips; 2, barley; 3, clover two years; 4, buckwheat."

Carrots, cabbages, beans, peas, etc., were recommended to vary the ordinary hay-diet of stock. Carrots were specially commended. "No milk, cream or butter," it is said, "can be richer than what is got from carrots, all through the winter and spring; no food will carry on a hog quicker or fat him better than raw carrots; cows and oxen may be fattened on them completely; horses do very well on them; and sheep eat them very greedily." "When the soil is rich and deep, the culture of carrots is very profitable."

The following are the author's instructions as to manuring with lime: "I have in the course of seven years put on as many thousand bushels of lime, in a great variety of modes. With reference to farming for wheat, rye or corn, every one takes his own method. It is impossible to form any general rule to suit all soils. The method must depend on the quality of your land. If the land be much worn out, it will take the less quantity of lime. The soil best adapted for lime is a loamy ground inclining to sand. At least, I have found it to answer best; although I have heard of great things being done with lime on clay. Deep ploughing in the first instance ought to be practiced, but shallow ploughing after the lime is laid on." Other directions for the use of lime are given, and also elaborate instruction as to the proper treatment of particular crops, as well as upon other agricultural topics.

Such was the agricultural reading which the Pittsfield newspaper furnished, three years before the organization of the New York Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Arts and Manufactures, and twenty-three years before the Berkshire County Society was incorporated. The meetings of the former society, commencing in 1791, elicited by their discussions a great fund of

information, the result of experiments made by men of unusual ability, and sufficient pecuniary means. This information, printed in their "Transactions" and other publications, and in the newspapers, scattered agricultural knowledge throughout the country, awakened thought, and, although more slowly than could have been wished, brought about improved practices.

Although it cannot be pretended that the advice and instruction so lavishly bestowed on the farmers was very speedily adopted by them, to the displacement of life-long practices and hereditary prejudice, it cannot, on the other hand, be supposed that men like Charles Goodrich, Eli and Oliver Root, the Cadwells, the Fairfields, Hosea Merrill, the Wrights, the Churchills, and a host of other intelligent Pittsfield farmers, were slow to examine, to discuss, and perhaps experiment upon, the new theories. And in fact we find them gradually adopted years before the institution of the Agricultural Society, and preparing the way for the co-operation of the best farmers of the county with Mr. Watson in that undertaking. Of course then, as now—and doubtless in greater numbers—there were instances in which obstinate stupidity persisted in robbing the earth until there was nothing more left which it had the skill to abstract; but it is not true that the mass of Pittsfield farmers pursued this course. There never was a time, except in exceptionally cold seasons, like those of 1816 and a few succeeding years, when Indian corn was not a successful crop on most farms whose soil had been originally adapted to it. The "run-down" farms were a more infrequent exception in the earlier than the later portions of the century. And for this stay of the downward progress of its agriculture, the county was indebted in a great measure to the teachings of pamphlets and newspapers, which we may be sure were fully discussed in the nightly gatherings at the village stores and taverns, and in neighborly visits around the great farm-house fireplaces.

And, if the teachings of the writers had all been rejected, still the mere incitement to thought would have been of incalculable advantage; for while the new theories were considered, the old practices must have also been reviewed, and the reasons for them questioned, with the result sometimes of modification, and sometimes of entire change, whether in the manner recommended, or on some original plan.

Some of the farmers kept journals of their work, giving the

dates at which they began and ended planting, hoeing and harvesting each particular crop, some of their operations in stock-raising, observations on the weather, and the like; but little is to be gathered from them concerning the methods of cultivation or amount of product. We learn, however, that the principal crops were Indian corn, flax, barley, oats, hay, buckwheat and apples. Wheat also continued to be a staple crop on many farms. Mr. Cadwell records, that in the spring of 1794 he paid eight dollars for his seed-wheat. No mention is made in any of the diaries which we have of potatoes, pumpkins, squashes, turnips or beans, nor of peas as a farm-product, although considerable crops of most of these articles appear from other evidence to have been raised.

Of garden luxuries, green corn, green peas and cucumbers were the chief, and the first appearance of each is every year chronicled with marked glee.

Great attention was paid to the breeding of horses and mules, many of which were sent to the West India and other markets. Some of the wealthiest farmers made a specialty of this branch of their business. The newspapers were filled with glowing advertisements of the qualities and pedigrees of favorite stallions. The Narragansett stock was particularly prized for hardihood, bottom and speed; and the justice of this reputation is proved by the rather startling story that Capt. Charles Goodrich, when eighty years old, rode a horse of this breed, one summer day, from Pittsfield, Vermont, to Pittsfield, Massachusetts—one hundred and four miles—starting after sunrise in the morning, and sleeping at home the same night.

The beef-packing of the merchants, and the use of hides by the tanners greatly encouraged the raising of cattle, and also led to the profitable practice of purchasing lean or young cattle from the drovers, to be fattened for sale. And the animals raised, although by no means equal to those of our present pastures, were quite as far from being the scrawny, ill-conditioned beasts which they have sometimes been represented. The Duke de la Rochefoucault Liancourt says that the county of Hampshire fattened large numbers of cattle, yearly, for the market; and, speaking of the whole state, adds, that “the pastures were covered with a fine breed of cattle, and also a large number of horses, which latter he did not think remarkable for beauty;” excellent

testimony to the character of Massachusetts cattle from one familiar with the best herds of Europe.

On the western side of Berkshire, the Dutch, before the transfer of the province to the English, had imported from Holland a small plump breed, many of whose descendants found their way to Pittsfield, where the cows were highly prized as milkers. Indeed, the "little Dutchies" were the favorites of many dairies. With the Dutch and English imported breeds, the Berkshire hills were not, in 1800, without very fair cattle.

Sheep were found on every farm sufficient to supply the domestic loom with a coarse wool, and the farmer's table with quite as coarse mutton. The Merinoes did not reach Berkshire until several years later. The swine were a "coarse, long-legged, large-boned, slab-sided, flab-eared, sharp-nosed generation, better fitted for sub-soiling than to fill a pork barrel;" so that, while beef-packing was a large and profitable business, pork afforded but an unimportant item. Mr. William Cadwell records in his diary in 1793, the slaughter of one hog weighing two hundred and forty-one pounds, and of another which weighed two hundred and five pounds. These seemed to have been considered of fair size, although they appear strangely small in comparison with the ordinary weights of the later breeds; not to speak of the monstrous masses of fat which attain the honor of cattle-show prizes and newspaper-paragraphs.¹

The price of land is stated by the French author, whom we have before quoted, at "from six to twenty-five dollars an acre—the same as in New Lebanon;" and his statement is confirmed by such deeds of that period as we have had opportunity to examine.

The following "list of prices for 1795," was found in the town assessor's book for that year:

Middling (average?) horse,	\$30.00	Middling cows,	\$12.00
Three-year-old, do.	15.00	Three-year-old cattle,	12.00
Yearling, do.	10.00	Two-year-old cattle,	7.50
Middling oxen,	40.00	Yearling cattle,	4.00

¹ In May, 1795, Mr. Cadwell, who was a skillful and prosperous farmer, although not among the richest in the town, gives the following list of his cattle: "2 oxen, 5 cows, 4 three-year-olds, 9 two-year-olds, 4 yearlings, 6 calves, 1 bull." At the same time he had about thirty sheep, "a few swine, turkeys, geese, hens," and undoubtedly one or more horses.

Swine per lb.,	\$0.03	Hay per ton,	\$5.00
Wheat per bu.,	1.00	Pork per lb.,	.08
Rye per bu.,	.50	Beef per lb.,	.04
Corn per bu.,	.40	Cheese per lb.,	.08
Peas and beans per bu.,	.67	Butter per lb.,	.12
Oats per bu.,	.25	Flax per lb.,	.08

Pittsfield Archives, p. 56.

MANUFACTURES.

In the earliest period of the town—less than seven years after the close of the French and Indian wars had given the security essential to the development of its resources—we found, in the first fulling-mill and the first iron-forge, the germs of that manufacturing interest which has since grown to so over-shadowing importance; and, before the close of the eighteenth century, manufactures began to form a valuable portion of its business, although here, as elsewhere in Massachusetts, agriculture and commerce continued to absorb to a great degree both enterprise and capital.

The clothiers flourished, and, although several of the Berkshire towns which afforded water-power had also their fulling-mills, those of Pittsfield brought to it much trade. The farmers' wives and daughters carded their wool, spun their yarn, wove and sometimes colored their fabrics at home; but all, except those intended for the most common wear, were sent to the clothiers to be fulled, dressed (sheared), and, if that had not been already done, dyed.

The fulling was done by the aid of a small water-wheel; the other processes by hand. The dressing was performed with a huge pair of shears, made expressly for the purpose, one blade of which lay flat upon the cloth, while the other closed upon it as they went rapidly snipping over the surface. The clothiers differed greatly in their skill as dyers, and some of them obtained a reputation among the good-wives which long outlasted their trade; but, if tradition does them no injustice, in most cases the colors, especially the jaunty blue, were anything but fast. The wearing of a new suit—a bridal suit, it might be—for a single day, left the unfortunate exquisite of a sadly mouldy hue, which he who was content with the humbler butternut, escaped. Claret, also a favorite color of that day, was very skillfully imparted. Mr. Stearns, the ancestor of the later manufacturers of that name,

obtained a high reputation by the brilliancy and permanency of his scarlets, a fashionable color for the cloaks of both ladies and gentlemen.

The appearance of these home-made cloths, when sent home by the clothier, neatly pressed and folded, was by no means so inferior to that of modern stuffs, as might be supposed.

There were four fulling-mills, or clothier's shops, in Pittsfield; that built by Aaron Baker, at the present Barkersville, about 1767, purchased by Valentine Rathbun, in 1770, owned in 1800, by Dan Munroe, and sold the next year to Daniel Stearns; that of Jacob Ensign at White's mills on Water street; that of Deacon Matthew Barber, erected by him, in 1776, in connection with a saw-mill, on the site of the present Wahconah flouring-mills; and that owned by Titus Parker, on the Cameron brook in the south-east corner of the town. The mills were thus scattered in different sections: Barber's being a mile and a half north, Stearns' three miles south-west, Parker's three miles south-east, of Ensign's. We have no means of ascertaining the exact amount of business done by either or all of them; but it must have been considerable, and much of it drawn from neighboring towns.

Another lucrative employment was found in the manufacture of malleable iron, and the working up of the product into various salable articles. The first allusion to this business is in the town records for the year 1767—the same in which Jacob Ensign received permission to build his fulling-mill. The town then refused to give Capt. Charles Goodrich anything for building a road from his iron-works,¹ which stood where Taconic village now does, to Keeler's mills, now Pontoosuc. So that it seems, the iron manufacture was introduced into Pittsfield by the most energetic and enterprising business man among its early settlers, and that it, a little, antedated the woolen manufacture.

Goodrich's forge passed through several hands, and continued in operation until about the year 1806. In its later years it was worked by Capt. George Whitney, and his four sons, Joshua, Asa, Noah and Porter, who performed the greater part of the

¹ It is worthy of note, that, upon the same site, Lemuel Pomeroy, a man in many respects strikingly like Captain Goodrich, afterwards had his musket factory; a business suggested by, and the natural successor of, the early forge. Captain Goodrich was the friend and political confere of Mr. Pomeroy, when the former was very old, and the latter a young man.

labor with their own hands. In addition to the manufacture of iron, they forged it into anchors, ploughshares and other articles which, beside the home-demand, found a ready market in Hudson and elsewhere. The first iron axletree made in Pittsfield, was forged by them for their own wagon; and the excellence of their workmanship is attested by the fact that, as late at least as 1872, it was still in use on a farm wagon in the West Part, having lasted about seventy years. They also placed the first tire upon a pair of wheels; a pair used by Capt. Hosea Merrill in his lumbering business, in which they broke down under some of the rough and rapid work required in connection with the cantonment in the war of 1812. But, notwithstanding the superior skill of the Whitneys, their industry and good character, their business proved a failure, and the forge passed out of their hands.

The second forge was built by Capt. Rufus Allen in 1775, on the west branch of the Housatonic, a few rods above the West street bridge; but the dam, in spring, superficially flooded so large an amount of soil which was left exposed to the sun in the dryer months, that fever and ague, and other low fevers, resulted; rendering it necessary after a few years to demolish it, and abandon the forge.

Afterwards, about the year 1788-9, Captain Allen, in company with Caleb Merrill, Simon Larned, and Elisha Camp (Thomas Gold acting as attorney for the latter), erected a forge on Onota brook, a few rods above its junction with the Housatonic, and near where it is crossed by Otaneaque street.

A little farther up the same stream, near the present location of Peck's lower mill, was the forge of John U. Seymour; and, still nearer the lake, on the site of Peck's upper mill, was that of Aaron Hicock. At Coltsville, on the site of the present paper mill, John Snow built a forge where he made a large quantity of iron.

Thus we have knowledge of six iron-forges, which were erected in Pittsfield, between 1767 and 1800—and which, with one exception, continued in operation some years after the latter date. They finally became unprofitable from the building of furnaces in the modern style at places which, like Lenox and Richmond, furnished coal and ore abundantly, and in close proximity.

The ore used in Pittsfield, was at first chiefly obtained in boulders, of great richness and purity, which were found scattered

over the fields, or buried in the drift; a large deposit in the gravelly hill between Seymour's and Allen's forges, now St. Joseph's cemetery, and probably others in different parts of the town. A rich deposit of similar boulders is now known to be buried on the east shore of Lake Onota, and many have been found in excavations for railroads and streets. Occasionally also they appear in old stone walls; and scattered lumps of similar ore are yet to be found in the neighborhood of Coltsville. But, for practical purposes, so far as was then known, this resource was exhausted years before the forges were abandoned; and ore was brought to them from Cone's and other mines, in Richmond and at the Shakers' in West Pittsfield; the latter of which was excavated before the year 1810, to the depth of sixty feet. The selectmen of Pittsfield, however, in reply to questions propounded by the General Court, reported in 1794, that they "knew of no mines or minerals in the town," and that "the ore used here came from Richmond, etc."

The early forges of Pittsfield and vicinity made malleable iron from the ore, but not by a single process. They were, however, very different structures from the blast furnaces and bloomaries by which the same object is now attained with vastly greater economy of labor and raw material. And in some respects they differed from those generally in use at that time in England and Eastern Massachusetts.

We have a detailed description of that built by John Snow, at Coltsville, from Mr. Phillips Merrill, who, in his youth, was accustomed to draw ore for it, and perfectly remembered its construction and operation. It did not differ much, except in size, from an ordinary blacksmith's forge. The hearth was about four and a half feet high, and twelve feet square. The center was slightly hollowed. In front a small aperture, across the top of which a bar or plate of iron was fixed, served to draw off the melted cinders which settled in the depression; the aperture, at the commencement of the operation being closed with clay, and tapped with a pointed iron bar when occasion required. Above the hearth the forge was open in front and on its two sides, and its back was like that of a common smith's forge. The chimney, which overhung the whole hearth, was supported by the back and by two iron pillars. The blast was supplied by two leathern bellows fourteen feet long—one on each side—driven by water-power.

Alternate layers of ore (prepared by roasting), charcoal, and lime flux, in proper proportions, were heaped in a rounded, or pyramidal, pile upon the hearth; additions being made as the fusion progressed, and the melted cinders being drawn off as before described.

The metal itself was never perfectly liquefied, but assumed a semi-fluid form in which it was occasionally lifted with levers, in order to let the cinder separate itself more freely. Finally, it was deposited on the hearth; an imperfectly-rounded mass, somewhat more crude than our pig-iron, and technically known as a *loop*.

This loop, still at a red heat, was next dragged, by means of a long hook, to the front of the hearth, and there beaten with a sledge-hammer, for the double purpose of expelling loose cinders, and bringing it into shape to be handled with the tongs, and fitted under the trip-hammer. This process was called *shingling the loop*.

When brought to the proper shape, the mass was re-heated, if necessary, and then, being lifted with tongs, was placed on a huge anvil under a heavy trip-hammer driven by water-power. At first the loop was so large that there was little space above it for the hammer to rise and fall. So that the blows were little more than a moderate tapping; but as it was reduced to shape, and more and more of the cinder expelled, the force of the strokes increased, until the loop became a perfect bar of malleable iron. The loop, after the shingling, and before being placed under the hammer, was generally about as heavy as a stout workman could well lift—perhaps two hundred pounds. The daily average product of a Pittsfield forge was, according to one authority, from one hundred to one hundred and fifty pounds of iron. Mr. Merrill thought it was somewhat more. There was wide diversity in the quality, as those who used chains and other articles requiring great tenacity in the metal, soon discovered; a large proportion being very inferior to that of the Messrs. Whitney.

The iron-makers sent a portion of their product directly to market, either in bar or in anchors and other manufactured articles. This was especially the case with the Whitneys; one of the sons, Porter, devoting himself almost exclusively to the mercantile part of their business. But much of the iron from the other forges was bartered with the town merchants. Persons

very recently living remembered seeing Mr. Seymour trudging to the village with a bar of iron on his shoulders, to return laden with goods for his workmen. Some of the iron thus bartered was sent to market by the merchants; but a great deal was used by the neighboring blacksmiths, on whom the people depended almost entirely for many domestic utensils, farming implements and mechanics' tools, now almost as exclusively manufactured in large establishments, and by the aid of machinery; except where, as with the old-fashioned cranes, hooks and trammels, which then hung in every kitchen-fireplace, they are dispensed with altogether.

Third among the manufactures of Pittsfield, in the order of time, but second, if not first, in the value of its production, was that of leather, for which there were three tanneries of considerable note. The first was probably built by Capt. Daniel Weller, on the north bank of Wampenum brook, on the west side of South street. In 1795, Captain Weller sold twenty-three acres of the south end of "lot No. 28 South," which included this tannery, to his son, the major, of the same name. The next spring he purchased ten acres of the north end of the same lot, where he built another tannery, if one had not already been built there, on the north bank of the Housatonic and on the west side of South street. His son, Enoch, had a bark-mill¹ on the little water-power on Wampenum brook below South Mountain street, from which he supplied tan to his father and brother, and perhaps to others.

In 1798, James Brown, who had learned the art and mystery of tanning from Capt. Nathan Pierson, a noted and wealthy tanner of Richmond—whose niece he married, built a tannery next to the Elm street bridge on Water street. Some years before, but how many cannot now be ascertained, he had established similar works on the north side of Silver lake. Whether they were abandoned immediately on the completion of the new, is not known. In 1800, Mr. Brown admitted his brother, Simeon, a partner in the Water street tannery, and for a long time, under

¹ It is doubtful whether this mill was exclusively owned by Enoch, as his father, in 1806, bequeathed a fourth part of the saw-mill, which had taken its place, to another person. It would be interesting to learn when this mill was built, as it is claimed that the first of the kind ever run by water-power, was erected at Northampton, in 1794; but we have not been able to do so.

the proprietorship of the brothers, as well as subsequently in other hands, it has had a remarkably-prosperous history.

Single rats were probably scattered in different parts of the town, as shoemakers and saddlers then learned the art of tanning as part of their trade; while the process of manufacture in vogue was so simple, the materials so cheap and abundant, and the demand for the product so great, that many farmers were led to enter into the business in a sort of household-way.

These conditions also rendered the manufacture upon a larger scale very profitable, and moreover favored the manufacture of boots and shoes; so that tanneries and shoe manufactories multiplied so greatly in all parts of New England, that, although the number in Pittsfield was considerable, and afforded a valuable source of local wealth, they did not give the town any special prominence for that branch of manufactures in the State; of which a single county, Middlesex, had seventy tanneries, some of them of very large product.

The opportunity to use coal at the iron-works, and bark in the tanneries, largely reduced the cost of clearing the forests; and this expense was still further counterbalanced by the utilization of ashes in the manufacture of potash, so that every portion of the tree was made a source of profit, although the earth was robbed of valuable fertilizers. For the product of the potashery, as for iron and leather, there was a ready sale at fair prices, both for the home and foreign market; the American potash being highly esteemed in the latter.

The process of manufacture was, and under similar circumstances still is, simple even to rudeness and wastefulness. The wood was usually cut into lengths of eight or nine feet; piled in heaps containing from one to three cords; and, when half dry, burned. The ashes were placed in large tubs whose bottoms were covered, six or eight inches deep, with brush-wood, above which was a three-inch layer of straw. Water was then filtered through the mass, till all the soluble matter was carried off in the lye which passed through an aperture in the bottom of the tub, into a proper receptacle.

This lye was then placed in large iron-kettles, and boiled until the evaporation left the matter held in solution in a solid form: a dark, almost black, crust, known to the workmen as "brown salts," having a strong alkaline and acid taste. These salts con-

sisted of a very large proportion of potash mixed with more or less carbonaceous matter, vegetable salts, and a little earth. This mass was thrown into a cast-iron kettle of considerable thickness, and subjected to a red heat for one or two hours, and most of the combustible matter was consumed. The residuum, when cold, was broken up, packed in tight casks, and sent to market—the American potash of commerce. It contained from five to twenty-five per cent. of pure potash, with impurities in various proportions, depending very much upon the care exercised in collecting the ashes after the burning of the wood.

In the ruder districts, all the processes of the manufacture were carried on by the farmers in the woods, and many potash-kettles might doubtless have been seen in the Pittsfield forests. As a general thing, however, it was more profitable to carry the ashes to the potasheries of the merchants, who paid eight pence a bushel for the best quality. Of these potasheries, that of Graves & Root, was opposite the tannery on Elm street; that of Colonel Danforth, in the rear of his store; that of Simon Larned “a little east of the meeting-house;” and that of J. D. & S. D. Colt, on West street, a little east of Center street; and each seems to have done a thriving business.

The staple manufactures of Pittsfield, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, were thus: cloth from household-loom, finished by the professional clothiers; malleable iron and its sub-products; leather; and potash.

To these may be added a quasi-manufacture, as lucrative, perhaps, as either of the others: the beef and pork packing carried on by the merchants; some of whom thought it more economical at least at times, to send the animals “on the hoof” to be slaughtered and packed at Hudson, although most of them had their own slaughter and packing houses.

There were several grist-mills; and saw-mills sprang up wherever there was water-power for them.

There were also several minor manufactories of a peculiar character. In one of Luce’s mills, linseed oil was made, and the residuum pressed into cakes for fattening cattle; the lean beeves bought of drovers, and fattened by merchant-packers, furnishing a constant demand for the latter product. Another utilization, it will be observed, of otherwise waste material, as the primary object of raising flax was to supply the household-loom.

After Capt. Rufus Allen's ill-placed forge-dam was demolished, John and Jabez Colt built one of more moderate height, on which they placed a manufactory of cut nails, which was in operation in 1800, but how much later we cannot determine.

The manufacture of wrought nails was early a household employment in New England; and in Pittsfield, as elsewhere, many farmers' families had little anvils upon which the boys worked at their leisure, producing a supply for their own use, and generally a surplus to barter at the village-stores. Economy of time, as well as material, ruled the hour.

This home-manufacture continued in some families as late as 1800, although about 1777 a nail-making machine was introduced; an awkward worker, producing only a headless article, but improved, previous to 1825, by one hundred and twenty-three patents. The Pittsfield works were among the earlier, and were probably unable to meet the competition of larger capital and improved machinery.

MERCANTILE AFFAIRS.

Commerce contributed no inconsiderable item to the wealth of the town, and, as in all new countries, the dealers in merchandise were, in one particular, merchants in a stricter sense than those who merely dispense to their customers the goods purchased at wholesale in metropolitan markets. They were the medium for the interchange of the products of the Berkshire farm, loom, forge, anvil and tannery, for the luxuries and necessities brought from the great centers of trade. They acted as middlemen in the outward, as well as the inward, course of traffic.

Of the earliest merchants of Pittsfield, and the nature of its traffic, we have scant information. Col. James Easton kept a store in connection with his tavern, and it would appear from entries in Rev. Mr. Allen's diary, that Capt. John Strong kept at least a few articles of merchandise. Probably most of the taverns kept some goods in their bar-rooms, varying in amount with the enterprise and means of their proprietors. David Noble, the patriotic and ill-fated captain of the minute-men, certainly carried on a considerable mercantile business at the West Part; but both he and his brother officer, Colonel Easton, seem to have had stores separate from their taverns.

We have no means of ascertaining the amount or method of

their trade; but what we know of them leads us to believe that they fully availed themselves of the opportunities offered by a new country for the shipment of furs collected by the Indians and Indian-like white men; of wheat which the virgin soil produced with that luxuriance which generally fringes the borders of civilization, and the other home-products which have been enumerated. Captain Noble had in store, when he was summoned to the field by the Lexington alarm, much grain and cloth, which he afterwards, with noble generosity, contributed to supply the wants of the army laying siege to General Gage, in Boston.

The business of Captain Noble and Colonel Easton was broken up by the war, in which both fought and suffered grandly; both sacrificed the greater part of their fortunes, and in which one died during the most arduous and,—as regards the daring exploits and extreme privations patiently borne by the soldiery,—one of the most glorious campaigns of the American armies, the first incursion into Canada. We refer again to these gallant men in order to remind the merchants of Pittsfield that the earliest of their number furnished splendid examples, which have not wanted worthy followers whenever their country has demanded similar self-devotion; although never since has the opportunity offered for that grandeur of patriotism which characterized Noble and Easton.

Captain Noble's goods were chiefly sent to Cambridge, by his direction, in 1775, for the use of the army; but Deacon Josiah Wright appears to have continued the store on its old site, on the north side of West street, beyond Lake Onota; and "store-keeping" occurs so naturally to the tavern-keeping mind, that probably other parts of the town were accommodated with at least a few "store-goods" in their numerous bar-rooms.¹

But, well as we should like to know how the early citizens of Pittsfield, and its housewives, were able to purchase their daily supplies, it would be of more interest to learn what goods the town sent to market in the old times, and through what channels; but upon these points we have no precise information. During the war, it is likely that the iron, cloths and buckskins,

¹ Captain John Strong, who kept the tavern now the Pomeroy Homestead, was an educated man, a graduate of Yale, and an able politician as well as a genial landlord; but some of these qualities were not likely to aid him greatly as a trader.

which must have been among the principal articles of export, were absorbed chiefly by the demands of the army. This was certainly true of horses, cattle, and other agricultural products.

When trade was not thus interrupted, home-made goods and the productions of the farm were interchanged among neighbors, generally without the intervention of a shop-keeper. Producers sometimes carried their goods personally to such markets as Albany, Kinderhook and Hartford; but, unless their product was large, it was bartered with the leading traders of the town, who, in their turn, bartered it in large markets. Purchases were also sometimes made directly by the consumers, at the greater centers, either on the occasional visits of the customer, or through some accommodating friend. The town's representative in the Great and General Court, was often overburdened by his constituents, with commissions of this kind; and in one instance, at least, was instructed by the town-meeting "not to purchase any goods in the town of Boston, beyond what was necessary for the use of himself and family." Whether this action was dictated by some petty hostility of the moment towards the capital, or was thought necessary in order to break up a system of brokerage which interfered with legislative duties, or for some other reason, we cannot now determine. At the close of the revolution, Pittsfield shared largely in the benefits conferred upon western Massachusetts and eastern New York, by the migration from the sea-board, of active and intelligent men who, relieved of public employment, sought new fields for their restless enterprise. Two of this class began a mercantile business in Pittsfield: Col. Joshua Danforth, whose life and character were sketched in our previous volume, and Col. Simon Larned, of Pomfret, Connecticut, who, like Colonel Danforth, had served with great credit in the army of the revolution. According to Dr. Field, these gentlemen came to Pittsfield in 1784, and commenced business as partners. If this is true, the connection probably arose from friendship formed in camp. It could not, however, have long continued, as we find by advertisements that they were soon carrying on trade separately, Colonel Danforth occupying the store built by him on the corner of East and Second streets; Colonel Larned a similar store a little farther east.¹

¹Such is the tradition; but, if Dr. Field's statement is correct, the first store must have been built by Danforth and Larned jointly.

Traffic was carried on for the most part by barter. Coin was scarce, Continental money had become entirely discredited, and there were few banks. What articles for barter were furnished by Pittsfield and its vicinity, we learn from the advertisements in the *Chronicle* and the *Gazette*. In October, 1788, Colonel Danforth wanted a hundred pounds of lamb's wool—merinoes had not yet come in for the finer products of the loom—and a number of good shipping-horses. In the same month, "having received a complete assortment of goods from New York," he offered to sell them at a low rate for cash, wheat, flax-seed, pork, beeswax, iron or ashes; at the same time announcing his revolt against the credit system, then almost universal, in the following paragraph: "And, as said Danforth is determined not to sell his goods on credit, those gentlemen who make him ready pay, may expect to have his goods very cheap." He made a special offer of salt in exchange for flax-seed. In December, he advertised payment in rum, brandy, loaf and brown sugars, coffee, chocolate, tea, tobacco, red-wood, alum, wool-cards, brimstone, German steel, salt and dry goods, for ten thousand bushels of good ashes, for which he would give the highest prices. He also made a particular call for pork and beeswax on the same terms.

Simon Larned published similar advertisements, offering European goods, West India goods "and cotton" of the best quality, in exchange for the best house-ashes at eight cents a bushel. He also offered nails for wheat.

These advertisements indicate the nature of the early barter traffic of Pittsfield; and, not to multiply quotations, we add only one, which shows Colonel Danforth in the character of a broker in public securities, for which his former position as pay-master in the army, had in some degree qualified him:

PUBLIC SECURITIES.—CASH, and the highest price given for Final Settlement Notes—Loan-office certificates of this and other States—Indents and Massachusetts State notes, at the store of Joshua Danforth in Pittsfield. Cash is also given at the above store for wheat, rye, corn and shipping-furs."

This advertisement appeared in February, 1790, when the national credit was rapidly appreciating under the influence of the lately-adopted federal constitution, while the disposition which was to be made of the different classes of public debt was

by no means determined; so that, all over the country, an active speculation in state and national securities, sprung up.

Passing onward to the years 1798-9, when light is thrown upon business through the columns of the *Berkshire Gazette*, we find that great changes had taken place during that brief interval. Col. Simon Larned had been succeeded in his store on East street by Perez Graves who, after conducting business for awhile alone, admitted as a partner his salesman, John Burgoyne Root, one of the sons whom that stout old loyalist, Ezekiel Root, had burdened with the names of His Britannic Majesty's commanders in America. Mr. Root was a very accomplished gentleman, a prominent citizen, and a leading democrat. In business he was interested in manufactures and agriculture, as well as commerce.

Joshua Danforth retained his old store. With the building of the meeting-house and town hall, the center of business was passing westward to Park square, where Jonathan Allen & Co., John Stoddard and J. D. & S. D. Colt all had stores of some pretension on the sites mentioned in our description of the village in 1800. Dr. Timothy Childs had built his medicine-shop on North street.

Both coin and bank-bills were still scarce, and trade was generally carried on by barter. In order to facilitate this, a system of mutual credit arose, the parties settling accounts at brief and stated periods, if they were wise, although this rule was far too loosely followed, which proved an excellent thing for the lawyers. Moving appeals for settlement, supplemented by threats of an attorney, were among the most common advertisements in the newspapers; and frequent failures showed the effect of the credit system upon the dealer.

A more perfect classification and organization of trade, indicated an advance towards the character of a market-town. Stores, with a general assortment of goods for country-trade continued to predominate, but in some, dry goods, and in others, groceries, were advertised as specialties.

Thus much for the Center. Rev. Robert Green still continued his store on Elm street, but with reduced proportions; and Horace Allen supplied the people of the West Part from his "general assortment."

CHAPTER IV.

DOMESTIC AND SOCIAL LIFE—MANNERS AND MORALS.

[1790-1810.]

The interior of houses—Dress—Household labor—Tea-parties—Social gaieties.—Spinning-bees for the minister's wife—Hunting-match and club suppers—Dancing-parties; their pleasures and their dangers—Freedom of manners—Influence of the wars and foreign intercourse on morals and manners—Customs in connection with dancing-parties—Bundling—Use and abuse of ardent spirits—Habits of Col. Oliver Root—Liquor-selling—Varieties of wines and liquors in vogue—Early efforts for temperance reform—Dr. Rush's essay upon the effects of alcohol—He favors wine, beer and punch—Gambling—Lotteries—Imprisonment for debt—Unequal laws—Reforms of the nineteenth century.

DOMESTIC life in Pittsfield, as in all New England, except the richer commercial and maritime towns, was simple, unpretending and economical. Even the more stately residences were in most respects plainly furnished. A richly-carved mahogany side-board, perhaps, with sofa and chairs to match, a massive dining-table, and card-tables of quaint pattern; a fine, large old mirror, a tall Dutch or English clock, its works of brass and its dial showing some curious device, either for astronomical information or simply for ornament. Some pieces of plate, not of the most artistic design, but of standard silver; a set of genuine china-ware, ornamentally deformed in the true oriental fashion; and the never-forgotten punch-bowl of silver, china or glass, surrounded by a bold and glittering array of cut-glass decanters and goblets. These sufficed for parlor-furniture. Paneled wainscoting, and cornices of ornamental joiner-work, relieved the monotony of the walls, which were also hung with imported paper, usually of a brilliant, if not gaudy, design. Generally there were suspended from them the portraits of, at least, the master and mistress of the house, in some cases the work of very eminent artists, but more often of some ordinary traveling painter. The huge old

fireplaces were inclosed in wooden mantels, frequently of an exceedingly handsome character, and their furniture, if not mostly of brass, was neatly decorated with that metal. There were sperm or wax candles in silver, or at least silver-plated candlesticks, for grand occasions; but tallow-candles, in brass or iron, served for ordinary use. In the chambers, the high, four-posted bedstead with its stately canopy of some showy material—a nocturnal enclosure condemned as murderous by modern sanitary science—was matched by window-curtains which hung in ample folds of a similar fabric.

Thus much of luxury, mansions of the more pretentious class had attained. But there were many modern improvements yet lacking. The only carpets were those home-made of rags; a household product which had been very recently introduced by Mrs. Van Schaack, and was not yet generally adopted. The first loom-woven carpet was brought into town by the wife of Dr. Timothy Childs, and covered a space about nine feet square, in the parlor of the house. The first carpet covering a whole floor was laid in the parlor of John Chandler Williams, and was a plain-figured brown and green ingrain. Within a few years it covered the floor of the choir of St. Stephen's church. For the most part, floors in all classes of houses were merely sprinkled with white sand. Painted floors were an innovation of somewhat later date, and were denounced by old ladies of conservative habits as dangerous, from the liability to slip upon them. The introduction of stone, instead of wooden, door-steps was resisted on the same ground.

From those in the first grade of houses, furniture and finish gradually diminished in quality, and as to some articles, in their essential character, as means or taste diminished. The sofa became "a settle," or a sort of wooden settee; the side-board became of a less costly material and construction; the mirror grew smaller; a wooden clock of Pittsfield or Lanesboro manufacture—and very excellent "makes" these were—took the place of the imported article. The chairs were of marvelous strength and comfortable shape, as many of them, remaining to this day, bear witness; but like the most of those, indeed, in the more costly houses, the material was no longer mahogany, and the carving was missing. Pewter took the place of silver; plain crockery of china, and glassware grew less in quantity and of inferior cutting.

Paper-hangings rarely concealed the plaster-walls, upon-which hung, instead of the oil-portrait, or the wax-miniature, the profile "snipped out" by artists who went from house to house, and often produced a more recognizable likeness than their more ambitious brethren of the brush were able to achieve. The joiner-work became less elaborate; but the carpenter was still chiefly relied upon for ornamental effects, and he concentrated his efforts around the fireplace, whose furniture showed less and less of brass, and more and more of the work of the village blacksmith. The chambers were less stately in their adornments, and some of even the middle class slept less grandly, but it is to be hoped more healthfully, in bedsteads absolutely uncanopied. Tallow-candles were the only light, and it was well if, upon special occasions, they were molded and not dipped; and the candle-sticks were of brass rather than iron.

In dress there was somewhat more of distinction between classes, than in furniture. The gentlemen of the wealthy and professional orders, wore the ordinary costume of the same classes in the cities, at least upon dress occasions. The ladies of the like position in society, had their silk robes, although not changed with every wind of fashion, and not used for daily wear. The home-made fabrics of wool were finished in very respectable style, and were generally worn by men. The use of calico by the women had, since the revolutionary war, become almost universal; but home-made linens were also much worn, a pattern of blue check being the most common. The dress of both men and women was intended to conform, as nearly as possible, to the fashion of the day. This fashion, under the influence of the French revolution in taste, which accompanied that in government, was rapidly changing, especially in the dress of men. Small clothes, knee-breeches, cocked hats and queues, were giving way to the more simple and convenient modern styles; and, as many clung to the style of garments to which they had been accustomed, a dress assembly of the earlier years of the nineteenth century, presented a variegated appearance. About the same time, the congregation in church must have been brilliant with the scarlet cloaks which were fashionable for both sexes.

In the household, economy and industry were almost universal. There were few appliances and inventions to relieve the labor of the housewife. The work of cooking, washing, sewing, and the

like, was done by main strength. The cook must lift the huge iron pot, which hung on the crane out-swung before the blazing fire; and deposit and withdraw the baking in the deep, brick oven, with the long, wrought-iron shovel. The laundress performed her task by pounding the soiled clothes in a barrel of water with a heavy pestle—even the fluted washing-board, having not yet been invented. Water was to be drawn from the cistern or well, by the most unaided process; the long well-sweep being the best mechanical assistance to be had. There were the unpainted floors to be scrubbed, and an excessively-broad surface of wainscoting and other joiner-work to be kept clean. And when all this was done, came the spinning, the weaving, the brewing, the candle and soap making, and other toils now unknown to the housewife. And, even yet further—for almost every dwelling was, to a certain extent, a farm-house—there were the duties which, as the students of health tell us, still overburthen and prematurely wear out the farmer's wife. With all this, and the large families of children, which were almost the rule, it is no wonder that the percentage of mortality among women was large, and that those who sustained themselves were accounted marvels of capability.

Many families had colored servants, mostly fugitive slaves from New York or Connecticut, or blacks who, having purchased their freedom, had emigrated from those States. Some of these attached themselves faithfully to kind employers with whom they remained for years; others were hired as their services were required. Other than these, servants there were none. Most households, however, included in their number "hired help;" American girls or men who lived with the family on terms nearly or quite of equality, and frequently intermarried with its younger members. Of course, in proportion to their faithfulness, they relieved the mistress of the house from the arduous labors which we have just enumerated; and her deftness in the manufacture of woollen cloths, bed and table linen, helped many a busy hand-maiden in her conquest of the heir of the farm.

The tables of all moderately well-to-do people were plentifully, temptingly, and not inelegantly, spread. There was much hospitality, and visiting friends were always welcome to most firesides. But the entertainment whose discontinuance the ladies have most occasion to regret, was the tea-party which brought them together with no male element to check the flow of soul. Nothing could

be more charming than one of these assemblies, especially if it happened of a summer evening before sunset, the open windows rendering it practically a garden-feast among the apple-blossoms or lilac-blows; or at least amid the odors of new-mown hay.

The social life of Pittsfield, from the era when the community began to recover from the pecuniary difficulties which followed the revolution, until after the war of 1812, was more genial, merry and unconstrained, than at any period before or since. If there lingered, among a few families, who had been tories or very conservative whigs, some traces of the old provincial aristocracy, inducing them to maintain the peculiarly-painful position of the *ancien regime* of a country-village—an already quaint and not very obtrusive ornament to it—they affected very little the general aspect of society, which went on its pleasant ways, with or without them, as it might chance.

Social gatherings were frequent, and characterized by much innocent gaiety. Public balls, and not quite so public “assemblies,” private dancing-parties, tea-parties, hunting-frolics, corn-huskings, ministers’ “bees,” followed each other in rapid succession, and not without frequent intermingling of resultant weddings. Still another class of festivities, less generally remembered, were the evening-suppers, at which the choicest of substantial country-luxuries—from the goose and turkey, down to the pumpkin-pie and the nut-cake, not forgetting apples, chestnuts and cider—were served in turn at the houses of circles of friends, who formed a kind of informal club; the most flourishing of which was the Woronokers, composed of immigrants from Westfield, and their descendants—a right hearty and jovial set of men, noted for stalwart frames, vigorous and manly intellects, integrity of character, and devotion to the democratic party.

Of the ladies “bees” for the benefit of the minister, we can give an idea in no better manner than by copying accounts of two of them, from the columns of the *Chronicle*. The first, from the issue of July 3, 1788, is as follows:

Thursday last, forty-five young ladies of this town, met at the house of Rev. Mr. Allen, and presented his consort with fifty-five runs of yarn spun in the best manner, as a sample of their industry, generosity and amity. The afternoon was spent in cheerfulness, perfect good humour and conviviality. So brilliant an appearance of youthful bloom, polite-

ness and decency of behaviour, on such an occasion, could not fail of inspiring the mind with ardent expectations of their answering the description of Solomon's virtuous wife, Proverbs, 31st chapter: "She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She layeth her hand to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates where he sitteth among the elders of the land. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."

A few months after this, the married ladies took their turn at the spinning-wheel, and the *Chronicle* thus tells the story:

Thursday the 9th inst., (Oct.) four and twenty married ladies of this town, assembled at the house of Rev. Mr. Allen, and among various other instances of respect and liberality, presented his consort with twenty-six runs of woollen yarn, the fruit of their industry. Such like repeated instances of amity and benevolence, not only entitle them to the blessings of the liberal soul that deviseth liberal things, which shall be made fat, and of him who watereth, of being watered himself by a richer abundance of the divine blessing; but cannot fail of producing the most beneficial influence on the other sex by softening the ferocity of the human mind, by promoting industry and diligence in their occupations in life, and by becoming productive of friendship and all the social virtues.

Hunting-matches, in those days of abundant game, furnished the occasion, and the most substantial viands, for many a merry evening's feast. The *Chronicle* tells of one, for instance, where a party of young men, although reduced in numbers by stormy weather, after a day's hunting, met, one October evening, in 1788, at Captain Caldwell's tavern, and "produced upwards of seventy gray squirrels and partridges, of which they made an elegant supper, and spent a festive evening in the greatest harmony, and jocund festivity." Constant allusions are made to similar feasts.

No event, from an ecclesiastical council to a military training, was suffered to pass without the accompaniment of festal entertainment, or at least very generous and convivial hospitality.

There was something very pleasant in this keen and general enjoyment of every variety of social life, and it is no wonder, that those living now, in extreme old age, look back upon it with delighted memories, and love to recount the festal scenes of their early youth. But this excess of social pleasures had its dark, as well as its bright, side. There were—not necessarily, in the kind

of amusements then popular, and considered innocent, but certainly in the circumstances under which they were indulged, and in the degree to which they were carried—temptations to which the virtue, even of the best, too often yielded. More than half a century before the settlement of Pittsfield, a marked decline—perhaps a re-action—from the severity of the Puritan life, had come to be lamented by good men. The Reforming Synod, assembled at Boston in 1679, in “a solemn testimony,” addressed to the general court, presented a long list of grievous sins which even then prevailed, closing with intemperance, “including the heathenish and idolatrous practice of health-drinking, and heinous breaches of the seventh commandment.” “The people,” said Cotton Mather, “began notoriously to forget their errand into the wilderness.”¹

Forty-eight years afterwards, things do not seem to have improved; for when, in 1727, Jonathan Edwards became pastor of the First Church in Northampton, “that great and good man,” says a writer in the *Congregational Quarterly*, “found that parish fully sharing in the degeneracy of the times. Vice prevailed, especially among the young. Intemperance and tavern haunting abounded. There was utter insensibility to the claims of religion. There was indecent behavior in the sanctuary. There was licentiousness among the youth. ‘It was their manner,’ says the watchful pastor, ‘very frequently to get together in conventions of both sexes for mirth and jollity; they would often spend the greater part of the night without any regard to order in the families they belonged to.’ Saturday night being regarded as part of the Sabbath, Sunday night was the gayest of the week.”²

In receiving this statement, we must make great allowance for the author’s stern censorship of social pleasures which many equally good men deem innocent; and which few now denounce as grossly sinful. His “conventions of both sexes” may have been merely dancing-parties continued late into the night: not an unusual occurrence at any era. Some portion of every community are obnoxious to his worst censures, and it can hardly be believed that even a large minority of the people of Northampton were guilty of the more serious faults named. At the worst, we must only believe that a certain looseness of discipline and

¹ *Congregational Quarterly*, April, 1869.

² *Congregational Quarterly*, Vol. XI, p. 72.

freedom of manners, led to too frequent instances of vicious conduct. And, with this qualification, the description of manners and morals may be transferred to the state of things in Pittsfield in the twenty-five or thirty years following the revolution, and, with somewhat more of qualification, for several years later.

President Edwards, soon after his ordination, set himself to stem the growing tide of irreligion and consequent immorality; and, it is said, gave its first effective check by a pointed discourse against "Sabbath-evening dissipation and mirth-making." This work he perfected and established, by a series of discourses upon justification by faith, "convincing his people of their need of distinct, substantial, ascertainable change of heart;" and resulting in a very remarkable revival of religion. "Three hundred," we are told, "were notably renewed in a population of two hundred families." "A thorough reformation of morals followed." For fifty years there had not been so little disorder and vice.¹

We can readily credit the efficiency which this religious agency is stated to have had in changing the manners and reforming the morals of Northampton; for a similar revival in 1822 effected a similar revolution in the general tone of society in Pittsfield; exercising an influence upon it which is very powerfully felt even yet.

But, although much of President Edwards' work at Northampton was doubtless enduring, even his grand abilities were insufficient to cope with the social tendencies of the age, and the more liberal theology with which his predecessor, Rev. Solomon Stoddard, had indoctrinated the Northampton church. And about the time that emigrants from that section succeeded in first making a permanent settlement at Pittsfield, the most eminent of American theologians was driven from his country-pulpit, on account of "his opposition to the prominent doctrines of his predecessor, and certain disciplinary measures to which he had resorted," and "to which his church was unaccustomed."²

Something of the liberalism, both in doctrine and in discipline,

¹This revival, which took place during the pastorate of Rev. Dr. Humphrey, who was aided by the distinguished revival preacher Rev. Asahel Nettleton, is described in the chapter of this work devoted to that period. One of its chief results was a stricter discipline in the church, whose membership was enlarged so as to include a large portion of those who gave tone to society.

²Holland's Western Massachusetts, Vol. 1, page 246.

which was so potent in the Connecticut valley, seems to have characterized many of the more influential first-settlers of Pittsfield; causing the difficulty in selecting the first minister, and perhaps preventing the union of some in the initial organization of the church. But from that organization onward, there is no hint of any heresy broached in the pulpit, or permitted in the church. The covenant and the articles of faith were as strict as the strongest Calvinist could demand. "The Scripture truth of the new birth was never lost sight of" by the preacher. "The half-way covenant" was never adopted by the church. Discipline was strictly enforced in the case of open and acknowledged sins, such as gross intemperance, breaches of the seventh commandment, unchristian quarreling and fighting, and family disturbances. But moderate daily drinking, no one considered to be an evil, dancing was not proscribed, and there were much more dangerous practices which were not even mentioned.

Throughout the province, with the amelioration of manners, the decadence of morals which had been rebuked by the early preachers, had continued, checked only at intervals and in limited localities. This decadence was greater in sea-ports and in larger towns, than in smaller interior communities; but few altogether escaped it. There were at work agencies of evil, more potent than any theological heresy. The contact of the youth of maritime towns with sea-faring and trading adventurers—generally of questionable, and often of unquestionably infamous, character: smugglers, slavers, and even now and then pirates—communicated a moral poison, which, to some extent, disseminated itself through the interior. Still more general, if not more pernicious, was the effect of the French and Indian wars, which, for a series of years, compelled a large portion of the young men of the province to spend long intervals in camp, freed from the restraints of society, tempted by the seductions of military license, and contaminated by association with the mercenaries of the army.

Life in camp, in bivouac, on the march, or even at the best in the little home-garrisons, must have tended sadly to relaxation of the stern manners and morals of the Puritans. The soldiery of the Pilgrim commonwealth were no longer, as a whole, of the Cromwellian school. It was much if the regimental commanders were able to maintain among them a wholesome physical police.

The best officers could do no more than to mourn over the moral delinquencies of their men.¹

Perhaps the most pestilent source of this demoralization was the example and conversation of the regular troops drawn from the dregs of the population of Great Britain, but who being sent over by the home-government, and commanded by distinguished officers, were naturally regarded by many of the raw provincials as models of what a soldier should be.

The lessons thus learned, with others of the same character, if not more deleterious, were more deeply impressed, by our French allies in the revolutionary army, and were carried home to every village; not indeed with sufficient power to destroy the hereditary virtues of New England, but with an influence which, for a time, abated the old stern reprobation of vice, and in a marked degree relaxed that strictness of social decorum, and that delicate sensitiveness of womanhood, which society always finds a wholesome protection. Some examples of the customs of the era of which we write, in Pittsfield, will illustrate our meaning. The parties, balls, huskings and other "conventions of young people of both sexes," gathered their participants, not from a limited circle in thickly-peopled villages, but from widely-scattered farm-houses, and even from neighboring towns; especially Dalton and Lanesboro, where some popular belles resided. The invitations having been given, when the assembly was to be at a private house, or the time and place announced if in some public hall, the young men proceeded at night-fall on horseback, each to the house of some lady who had accepted his escort, and who promptly mounted the pillion behind him and clasped his waist. In this pleasant fashion the pair, sometimes with others but often alone, rode from one to six miles, on the lonely roads.

Arrived at the ball-room or parlor, the dance—happily, the floor was as yet innocent of waltz and polka—was kept up until long after midnight. A feast of substantial luxuries was provided,

¹Letters of Col. William Williams, Col. Seth Pomeroy and others. We have a letter, in the Thomas Colt collection of manuscripts at the athenæum, written during the French and Indian war, in which a colonel, sending to an officer in his rear two degraded women who had followed his camp into the hostile New York forests, then swarming with savages, begs that they may be carefully sent beyond the army lines, as they had already demoralized two or three companies.

and we may be sure was partaken of with a hearty relish. The ladies sipped their wine, and cider, and did not disdain the more homely, but also more seductive, flip; or yet more tempting cordial; while the gentlemen indulged in even more fiery and exciting beverages.

The night's festivities over, the party separated and the guests returned, as they had come.

We do not mean to be understood, that every social gathering in the town was precisely like that here described. In some houses there was less of license on account of religious scruples; and in some a more refined breeding effected the same chastening. But in general, social assemblies were as represented; and in hardly any was it possible to avoid the more dangerous incidents described. Participation in the amusements condemned by President Edwards was not deemed inconsistent with Christian character, except by a few Methodists; and church-discipline did not meddle with any line of conduct unless it developed itself in definite and palpable violation of moral law. And such offenses very rarely occurred in comparison with what the temptations and opportunities would lead us to apprehend. In all new-settled countries, where freedom of intercourse between the sexes is, in a degree, a matter of necessity, female chastity becomes a law and a protection to itself. In most cases it was so in the early days of Pittsfield. There were, however, and it could hardly have been otherwise, sad and notable exceptions. But it is to be remembered that the customs, and the errors which arose from them in Pittsfield, were not specially prevalent or marked in that town. They were universal, and in many sections of the country more pronounced. There was a still coarser class of dancing-parties than those we have described, frequented by a lower order in society, and more debasing in their effects upon morals. These were held in the less respectable taverns, and were called, as similar assemblies now are, "shake-down" balls, and it is certain that their effect upon morals was only evil. Chastity indeed was hardly looked for or expected in the class which attended them.

Another source of evil, in all except among a few of the more refined families, was the practice by affianced lovers of what is known as "bundling." This custom prevailed over the whole country, and is thought by the most learned authority upon the

subject, to have been brought home by prisoners returning from Canadian captivity. It was, however, universal long before the settlement of America in all the northern countries of Europe, and was quite as unlimited in all their colonies; so that there seems to be no reason to look for any extraordinary source for it in any one of them. It was known to the Germans of Pennsylvania, to the Dutch of New York, and to the French of Canada. If it did not appear in the earliest days of New England, it was doubtless due to the scrupulous watchfulness of the Puritans. And when that watchfulness diminished, the old custom spontaneously revived. It is a favorite theory of those who form theories without close examination of data, that practically no harm came of it: but the record shows that, while the practice continued, the co-habitation of respectable betrothed parties before marriage was exceedingly common, and it met with little or no reprobation from the community; while the church condoned the sin, or passed it over with a very perfunctory reprimand. It is to be remarked, however, that society which looked very leniently upon ordinary cases of seduction, placed its heaviest ban upon the man who took advantage of this practice. And it therefore happened that the promise of marriage was rarely broken.

The use of ardent spirits, wine and beer was almost universal: their abuse was very common. They were offered to the visitor on the most ordinary calls, and to refuse them, except for the most manifest special reasons, or by the extremely rare persons who were known never to taste them, was considered by many hosts an affront. A friendly glass was expected to accompany the most ordinary transactions between man and man. They were an essential element on all social and ceremonial occasions. Not only were they brought forward at military elections and parades, civil elections and inaugurations; but no ordination of a clergyman, no dedication of a church, was complete without them. And some of these ecclesiastical occasions in the early part of the present century are credited by tradition with a scarcely seemly exuberance of convivial mirth. At all social parties, at all gatherings of special gladness, such as weddings and births; at all meetings of special sadness, such as funerals; wines and liquors were provided, and, more than at any other time, it was considered rude, and perhaps unfriendly, to refuse the proffered glass. It is related of Col. Oliver Root, the strictest of temperance men,

according to the standard of that era, that it was his invariable custom in his later years to tender his congratulations personally on the birth of each child in the somewhat prolific district of the West Part; and that, upon each call, the happy father invariably hastened to concoct for him a particularly-aromatic glass of sling, although it was observed that he never more than barely tasted the tempting beverage. He shrewdly suspected that when he left, the concocter took care that the remainder of the glass should not be lost.

It was the custom in Colonel Root's household, every Saturday to brew a sufficient quantity of a mild ale to last as a beverage for one week, that being as long as its strength would preserve it. Cider of course was with them an ordinary drink. But every year the temperance colonel purchased a half-barrel of whiskey, as indispensable to enable his laborers to endure the toils of haying, although he never partook of it himself. In the shops kept by the most respectable and scrupulously-virtuous citizens, ardent spirits and wines were, until long after this date leading articles of merchandise; almost always heading the list of goods advertised in the newspapers. To show the kinds of spirits favored by that generation, we copy from an announcement by Sanford and Robbins, whose store was on the corner of North street and Park place in 1800. Of fifty articles enumerated, the first sixteen are:

“St. Croix Rum, Jamaica Spirits, Cogniac Brandy, Spanish Brandy, Raspberry Brandy, Holland Gin, Molasses, Soap, Lump and Brown Sugar, Madeira, Vidonia, Sherry, Lisbon, Port and Malaga wines.” In other parts of the list, we find “Cordials, Stoughton's Bitters, and London Porter.”

But common as the use of alcoholic stimulants was, and venial as occasional indulgence in them to excess was considered, a marked improvement in that regard was perceptible between the years 1786 and 1800. That class of habitual intoxication which had sprung from a desire to drown the sense of helplessness and hopelessness, which at the first-named date overwhelmed so many, had been greatly lessened by the revival of national prosperity; although not before an invincible habit had fixed itself upon many persons.

The very excess to which the evil of intemperance had grown,

helped in some degree to work its own cure. Men shrunk from indulgencies when their result became palpable and revolting; and if they did not totally abandon the cup, confined the use of it, so far as they had strength of will, within moderate bounds.

Nor had philanthropic effort been wanting in opposition to the use of ardent spirits as a beverage. In the year 1788, the newspapers of the whole country—and among them the *Pittsfield Chronicle*—in compliance with the request of a Philadelphia organization, published Doctor Rush's celebrated essay, "An enquiry into the effects of ardent spirits upon the human body." In this work the direful effects of alcoholic drinks, in the form of distilled liquors, were faithfully depicted, and scientifically explained; and its general diffusion must have had much beneficial result. Doctor Rush, however, maintaining a doctrine still held by a large number of the medical faculty, advocated as a substitute for spirits, the use of wine and beer, both of which he recommended "as very wholesome liquors in comparison." Indeed he eulogized beer as "abounding with nourishment," and wine as "both cordial and nourishing." "The effects of wine upon the temper," said he, "are in most cases directly opposite to those of spirituous liquors. It must be a bad heart indeed, that is not rendered more cheerful and more generous by a few glasses of wine." Punch also met the reformer's favor, as "calculated, like wine and beer, to lessen the effects of hard labor upon the body. The spirit of the liquor is blunted by its union with the vegetable-acid. Hence it possesses, not only the constituent parts, but most of the qualities, of cider and wines." He adds, however, that, "to render this liquor innocent and wholesome, it must be drunk weak, in moderate quantities, and only in warm weather."

Such were the teachings of the leading advocate of temperance near the close of the eighteenth century; and very few of his followers advanced beyond his stand-point until the remarkable total-abstinence movement of 1828. It may be well believed that they did not very seriously check the convivial habits of the richer class, or prove very convincing either to the higher or lower orders in society.

A vice almost as universal as intemperance, and almost as deleterious, was that of gambling in its various forms. Games of chance were frequently engaged in to the ruin of individual

fortunes. A passion for horse-racing which had been patriotically suppressed during the revolution, revived at its close, and a race-course was established in the vicinity of the present Pleasure park. But the most prevalent form of gambling was by lottery, which was, not only undiscouraged by the church and the state, but continued to be favored and maintained by both. One was established in the county of Berkshire for the aid of Williams college, and managed under the auspices of its pious and reverend trustees and faculty. The *Sun* newspaper, was filled with advertisements of the schemes of lotteries in other states, of which its editor was the local agent. Few denounced them as an evil, and the best men in the community did not hesitate frequently to try their fortunes by the purchase of tickets. The multitude, following this example, thronged to the shops of the ticket-venders, and the result was a dissipation of property in the thriftless pursuit of illusory hopes, and the gradual sinking into poverty of those who were dreaming of sudden wealth poured out from the cornucopia of that goddess of fortune who was so temptingly depicted on the tickets and advertisements of the various companies.

Imprisonment for debt, so far as regarded the closeness of the confinement and the unhealthfulness of prisons, was not so cruel and revolting as it was described at the epoch of the Shays rebellion. Prisoners from whom no attempt to escape across the lines into other states, which lay in inviting proximity, was feared, were allowed the "liberty of the yard;" that is, they had the privilege, unless the creditor objected, of spending the day wherever they pleased within the limits of the county-town, returning at night to the jail. Still, the old credit-system in business continued to prevail, and it was still protected by as relentless a law, as relentlessly resorted to, as ever. The majority of creditors did not scruple to avail themselves of all the power which that law gave them over the persons of unfortunate neighbors with whom they had been living on the ordinary terms of neighborly friendship; and, so much was this deemed a matter of course that, on the release of the debtor, the old relations were often, perhaps generally renewed, as if nothing had occurred to interrupt them. Instances of what would now be called barbarous rigor—disregard for the dictates of ordinary humanity—and forgetfulness of intimate friendships, are however still remem-

bered as happening all through at least the first quarter of the present century. And family-feuds, not even yet extinguished, arose from them.

The struggle to abolish the law under which such practices were possible, was long and earnest. The democrats of Pittsfield and Berkshire, as elsewhere, warred against it with spirit. Articles attacking it in every form were frequent in the columns of the *Sun*, which never let an opportunity pass to illustrate its cruelty, or to prove its inefficiency in accomplishing the ends for which it was kept upon the statute-book.

The compulsory support of public worship, with its incidental partiality to the standing-order, and the property-qualification, which created different classes of voters and deprived the poorest of the right of suffrage altogether, still maintained their place among the laws to whose fundamental principles, and whose general character, they were so repugnant that they stood out as glaring inconsistencies.

It will be perceived, from the foregoing pages, how gigantic an advance has been made, both in morals and in law, during the past seventy-six years. It was the work of the men who lived and labored during the first forty years of that period, to fight the battles from which that advance chiefly resulted. If we shall find their achievements in this conflict less splendid and less striking than those of the revolutionary fathers, less marked in their effects upon the material prosperity of the town than those of later days, let us be sure that they were surpassed by neither in their beneficial influence upon the happiness of those who have come after them; as those who won them were inferior to none in generosity of sentiment, and pure devotion to justice and right.

The reader need not be reminded that the obnoxious laws which have been mentioned, and the odious manner in which it was the custom to make use of them, were heir-looms bequeathed from more barbarous ages, preserved by the more timorous classes as talismans essential to the maintenance of social order, and the protection of vested rights. But it was also true that the moral and social evils which have been described, were also relics of less advanced ages. The noxious vapors of too lax judgment of moral wrong, of too lenient consideration of libertine habits, of insufficient guardianship of the outworks of virtue—

vapors which had for ages been generating throughout the great world—began to spread inward through the atmosphere of New England, whose purity had at first been so sternly guarded against infection: an infection, it is to be observed, as old as the seduction of the mother of mankind. It is to be farther remarked that the purity of New England was only as yet subjected to contagion; had felt some of its evil effects, but was not fatally or radically infected. Toleration of some dangerous social practices and a general freedom of manners, which, in the revolt of the community against too stringent censorship, had become excessive, were sure, by that very excess, to cause a re-action in the opposite direction. The undisturbed foundations of correct moral sentiment were yet firm enough to render such a result certain.

It is not a novel remark that men of earlier epochs are not to be tried by the standard of morals which governs those of more advanced eras. This axiom cannot, it is true, be pleaded in defense of the toleration of, or indulgence in, those gross vices which are in terms condemned by the divine law; although we naturally view with somewhat more leniency, those who follow the multitude to do evil, than those who stand out conspicuously in opposition to a virtuous popular sentiment. But setting aside these extreme and exceptional offenses—and leaving out of consideration, also, those acts, such as the selling and the moderate drinking of alcoholic beverages, concerning which the opinion of the world is still divided—the remark quoted applies with great force to the case before us. Some of the moral evils which have been described as prevailing in Pittsfield from seventy-five to a hundred years ago, and even extending into later days, were then only condemned as such by the severest school in religion; others, like gambling by lotteries, only suspected of evil by the keenest observers, were held, by the very censors of public and private conduct, to be positive benefits, and were used by them, without scruple, to advance any costly public enterprise. It will be observed that President Edwards selected for his sternest reprobation, the custom of the social dance; an amusement which, with the restraints which modern society throws around it, is now held by the community at large, to be perfectly innocent; while other practices of his time, which “betray themselves to every modern censure” are not even mentioned. It does not follow, of course,

that they were approved by President Edwards; for it was his method of effecting reforms in morals, to apply the axe at the root of the tree of evil, in the form of spiritual and religious truth, leaving special branches to perish of themselves. It may safely be inferred, however, that the offenses unmentioned by him, did not shock him as they now would shock ordinary men. It is certain that they did not at all shock good men at the time of which we write. And we are not to condemn them that they disobeyed moral laws which had not yet been discovered.

And the distinction to be observed between a practice at a period when it is regarded as innocent, and the same practice when it has been discovered to be extremely detrimental to individuals and society, extends farther than to the mode of condemnation which is due to him who indulges in it. It affects the consequences of these practices in an important particular. In both cases they are evils, and their direct evil results in both, inevitably follow, each after its kind; but when indulged in by those conscious of their nature, and of their consequences, they become also vices; and not only produce the harm inherent in them, but deprave him who follows them. And if his offense involves a violation of positive enactments by divine, or legitimate human, authority, so much the deeper will be the essential degradation of his manhood. Thus, when the trustees of Williams college established and conducted a lottery for the benefit of that institution; when Phinehas Allen was the agent in selling tickets for the benefit of equally-praiseworthy objects; and when Rev. Thomas Allen bought, as his diary informs us that he did, lottery tickets for himself and his children, the countenance which they all gave to this species of gambling, undoubtedly led to the impoverishment of the people, and tended to induce, in many, habits of idleness and a desire for unearned wealth. But, as they acted with no suspicion of these results, and would certainly have refrained if they had been warned of them, their actions did not at all remove them from the side of right and virtue in their eternal conflict with wrong and vice. Their dealings with the lottery no more tainted or depraved their moral nature than transactions in wheat, lumber, or cotton-goods would have done; while he who does the same thing to-day in defiance of knowledge and in violation of law, at once enrolls himself in the army of vice, blunts his sense of right and wrong, and depraves his whole nature.

So, in another department of morals, with regard to the practice of bundling. In an age when it was nearly universal, and was looked upon as a matter of course, and when the limits to which it was subjected were well understood, compliance with it, however dangerous it proved in many cases, afforded no presumption against virtue; while, under the greater refinement and more fastidious requirements of later days, such a presumption would be inevitable.

We make these suggestions, obvious as they must appear to most readers, as there are always those ready to plead the sins of good men of old, as a precedent and an excuse for their own; while others are willing enough to cite the apparent weaknesses of the old time, as evidences to disparage its virtue.

Believing the whole truth regarding the past essential to the best interests of the future, we have not attempted to exaggerate the excellencies, or conceal the weaknesses of the fathers; but we think that the reverence in which they should be held, will not be at all diminished by this, if they are scanned with proper regard to the place which they occupied in the march of the ages.

CHAPTER V.

SOME LEADING CITIZENS.

[1800-1810.]

Charles Goodrich—Woodbridge Little—Rev. Thomas Allen—Dr. Timothy Childs—David Campbell—Henry Van Schaack—Oliver Wendell—Henry H. Childs—Thomas Allen, Jr.—Jonathan Allen—Rev. William Allen—James D. Colt—Samuel D. Colt—John B. Root—Oliver Root—Lemuel Pomeroy—Phineas Allen—Jason Clapp—John W. Hulbert—Ezekiel Bacon—The generation as a whole—The town epitomized.

THE year 1800 found, still prominent among the citizens of Pittsfield, many who had been active in its affairs during revolutionary and provincial times, and who generally retained the characteristics which had marked their earlier career.

Capt. Charles Goodrich, who in 1752 became the first settler of note in Poontoosuck plantation, and whose peculiar, but large and honorable part, in the earlier history of the town, we have chronicled, was in 1800, at the age of 81, as resolute, as energetic, and as combatant in his federal leadership, as he had been in 1776-81, when we knew him as the champion in doubly-rebellious Berkshire, of the government at Boston which, with the banner of revolt and independence in one hand, clung desperately with the other to that broken reed of legitimate rule, a mutilated and forfeited royal charter.

Woodbridge Little, still, at 59, in the full vigor of his intellect, with the pen and the living voice, displayed the same ability in his advocacy of federalism, and the same dread of popular power, that he exhibited when he plead the cause of the tories and the conservative whigs against the violent radicalism of the revolutionary committees of Berkshire. Mr. Little's abhorrence of change was constitutional, and extended to lesser matters as well as to politics. A curious illustration of this trait in his character occurred in his later years. The roads from north-eastern

Berkshire, including the great Boston highway through Windsor and Dalton, reached East street, then the principal business section of Pittsfield, by a road which ran directly south from a point near Mr. Little's house, to Elm street; a very circuitous route. In the year 1806 a proposition was made in town-meeting to open what is now known as Beaver street in a direct line from Mr. Little's house to the foot of East street, affording a very great convenience to himself and the public. But it broke up the old order of things, brought him a little more in contact with the world as it was—a very small corner of it, then, to be sure—and disturbed a little the old form and dimensions of his farm; and, true to his conservative instincts, he opposed the new avenue with the bitterest vehemence, and was able to postpone its construction until 1811.¹

Mr. Little died in 1813, retaining his resentment to the last, and leaving directions that his funeral-procession should pass over the old road, and by no means over the new avenue, which he had never used in life; neither winter's storms nor summer's suns having ever once driven him to deviate from the true conservative route to church and post-office; although he had been compelled by stress of circumstances to accept the new federal-republican government, as a tolerable substitute for royal rule.

In considering those days of absorbing political strife, political classification naturally first suggests itself, and another leading federalist whose connection with public life, although in 1800 he was but forty-seven years old, dated back to revolutionary times, was John Chandler Williams. A little eccentric in manner, as it seems to have been thought good for dignitaries to be, but revered for much, professional learning, for the soundest wisdom and the most incorruptible integrity in matters both great and small, Mr. Williams transacted his business as a lawyer and magistrate in the quaint and dusty office in the north-west corner of his gambrel-roofed mansion, where he began the practice of his profession in 1782, and where he continued it until his death. Taking an active, earnest and decided part in all classes of public affairs, he of course met many earnest, active, and decided opponents; but few, if any, continued their hostility to him after the passion of the conflict had subsided.

¹The final vote to build the road passed in 1810, but it was not opened until 1811.

Prominent among the magnates of the town, was Thomas Gold. This gentleman, a son of Rev. Hezekiel Gold of Cornwall, Connecticut, was born in 1760, graduated at Yale college in 1778, and commenced the practice of the law at Pittsfield in 1782. Like most of the graduates of Yale who early became residents of Pittsfield, he was a man of elegant culture and refined tastes. As a lawyer he was able and shrewd to a marked degree. In matters of public as well as of private business, he was enterprising, discreet and clear-headed. We shall find him occupying positions of great responsibility in the town and in public institutions, with advantage to his constituents. As a politician he was active and ambitious, but the voters did not implicitly trust him, and he was more successful in acquiring property than in obtaining office. We have noticed his early escapade as a participant in the Shays rebellion; but growing years had taught him conservatism, and in 1800 he ranked with the most decided federalists.

Ashbel Strong, a lawyer of ability and a man of scholarly tastes, was a federalist of some note. He was born at New Marlboro, January 19, 1754, the son of Rev. Thomas Strong, the first minister of that town, who was a native of Northampton and a graduate of Yale. Ashbel graduated at Yale in 1776, having been admitted to the Berkshire bar two years before. In 1792 he married Mary, or as the town-record has it "Polly," daughter of Major Israel Stoddard, and granddaughter of Hon. Israel Williams of Hatfield. He represented Pittsfield in the legislature of 1799 and was appointed county-attorney in 1802. Having no children of his own, he educated in his family two nephews and a niece. He died in 1809.

Another man long of note and influence in town, was Capt. David Campbell. Captain Campbell was the grandson of Rev. John Campbell, a Scottish divine, who having received a classical and theological education at Edinburgh, emigrated to America in 1717, and in 1724 became pastor of the church in Oxford, Mass. His grandson removed to Pittsfield about the year 1790. He was a man of large and varied information, of a genial and generous temperament; active, but cool and of the shrewdest judgment, in his business-affairs. It can hardly be said of such a man that he was fickle in his pursuits; but he certainly made frequent changes in them, being by turns, farmer, trader, tavern-

keeper and manufacturer. There is a tradition, of suggestive exaggeration, that there was not a desirable piece of real-estate in Pittsfield that he did not at some time own. In politics he was a federalist. In person those who knew him late in life describe him as portly, dignified and commanding.

Last, but far from the least, of the federalists of the eldest generation, was Henry Van Schaack, who still loved to descant on the virtues of Washington and Adams to his neighbors; to the lawyers who at every adjournment of the court at Lenox flocked to his hospitable mansion; the trustees of Williams college, who made it their rendezvous on their way to commencement;¹ and to the magnates of the federal party, who, including Hamilton, were from time to time his guests, and with whom it was his greatest pleasure to share his rich wines and sparkling cider.

Mr. Van Schaack had been a very thorough and intelligent student of the federal constitution, and appears to have been more perfectly satisfied with its guaranties of stability in government than were many of his fellows in politics, who, although they had never been tories, yet distrusted the new order of things as without sufficient powers of self-preservation. Mr. Van Schaack was, however, not a mere politician. He had become a scholar of fair attainments in many branches of learning, without the aid of schools; but he did not undervalue their advantages, and was the ardent friend of educational institutions of every grade. We have already described his strong interest in religious affairs, and his arduous exertions in behalf of the equality of all denominations before the law. In business, although his

¹It was the custom for the Rev. Mr. Judson of Sheffield, the trustee in the county who lived farthest south, to pick up his colleagues along the route, so that they arrived at Williamstown in a body. The southern members, on reaching Pittsfield invariably partook of the good cheer of their associate, Mr. Van Schaack; and under the influence of his cider and madeira, many a solemn witticism and grave joke were perpetrated. Mr. Judson, the only democrat on the board, was subjected to much good-humored banter for his politics' sake; but the shafts of wit which were aimed at him could not have been very fatal, since it was considered a brilliant sally when, the host having asked Mr. Judson whether he would have federal or democratic cider, and he answering, as was expected, that he preferred the democratic, received a glass of a particularly hard beverage; while the rest of the party were smiling over that which "equalled the best champagne."

early life had been spent in mercantile pursuits, and although he was not dependent on the product of his farm, he was a skillful, enthusiastic and industrious practical farmer, in which connection a characteristic anecdote is told of him. One Jones, a neighbor whose passion for talking federal politics knew no bounds, nor distinction of time or place, called upon him while he was at work in his potato-field, and began upon his favorite theme. "Yes, yes," interrupted Mr. Van Schaack impatiently, "Yes, yes, neighbor Jones, I know all that well—very well. Adams and Pitt are great and good men—very great and good men; and Tom Jefferson and Napoleon are rascals, *very* great rascals; no doubt about it, neighbor Jones. And democracy is going to be the ruin of the country, and federalism is the only safe and sound doctrine; no doubt about it at all. I know all that, neighbor Jones, well, *very* well,—but potatoes must be hoed!" And, that being the duty which just then lay nearest to him, he set about it with a vigor which utterly discomfited poor Jones, and sent him away with a budding suspicion as to the faithfulness of his veteran leader.

A devoted ally and highly-prized counselor of the Pittsfield federalists, although only a summer-resident, and not a voter in the town, was Judge Oliver Wendell of Boston. Judge Wendell took a deep interest in the political conflict which raged in Pittsfield with exceptional bitterness even in that era of bitter political strife, and as his patriotism was long-tried and unquestioned, his name was of great value to the cause which he espoused.

Passing to the democrats of the earliest generation, Rev. Thomas Allen is first met; as energetic, as earnest and as uncompromising as a leader of the Jeffersonian republicans, as he had been of the radical revolutionary whigs. He loved democracy, as under some name he had always loved it, as the very perfect flowering of Christianity; and he hated federalism, as he had always hated the royalty, which he firmly believed that he detected under its mask. If he contended against this half-disguised foe with too little charity for those who differed from him, it must be said also, that it was with utter disregard of his own comfort and pecuniary interests. If he gave up to party too much of the energies and talents which, we conceive, might have been better employed in behalf of religion, education, or the merely material affairs of the town, we must remember that it was to

contend for principles whose triumph, he honestly believed, was essential to any wholesome and permanent development of those great interests.

But, deep as was his concern in political affairs, and devoted as his labors were in behalf of Jeffersonian doctrines, it is to be doubted whether he, to any very censurable degree, neglected for them, any of his more immediate duties. In the heated discussions of the day he was charged with giving the time which ought to have been spent on his sermons to indite political articles for the *Sun*; but it seems clear that the style and substance of his pulpit-labors were acceptable even to those who objected to "the introduction of affairs of state" in them, and it is likely that the opportunity afforded of expressing his views in the columns of a newspaper, often counteracted the temptation to interlard a sermon with them. As to other pastoral labors, even the children of federal families retain a loving memory of his tender and sympathizing manner in performing them. His regard for common schools, which he so generously manifested when a scantily-paid young minister, continued to the last. It is evidence of his faithful parental care that in the year 1800, he was surrounded by sons, to all of whom he had given a good—and to two of them a classical—education, and all of whom by his aid entered upon active life under favorable auspices. Nor was he less regardful of his daughters. Indeed, his story is full of incidents showing the warmth of his parental love. Let these features in the character of the man and the minister, be remembered when we are called upon to relate the part which his views of right compelled him to take in the heated political conflict which divided the town and the church into two hostile parties.

Another leading man, quite as decided in his political opinions, but rather less emphatic and energetic in their defense, was Dr. Timothy Childs, who, at the age of fifty-two, was at the head of his profession in Pittsfield, although not so exclusively its physician, as when in 1775 the town-meeting requested him "to return from the army, as it was very sickly here." We have already sketched his character.

Col. Joshua Danforth still kept his store on East street, but, the federalists being in power, had lost his office of postmaster, which probably did not tend to mollify his political feeling.

Still, earnest and well-defined, as his opinions were, his knowledge of mankind, acquired in the army and by business-contact with many classes, had taught him a toleration unknown to his associates. It had also been his good fortune to meet the enemies of his country only in open conflict on the battle-field, while they had grown morbidly vindictive towards, and distrustful of, all political opponents, in the more rancorous encounters of pen and tongue; as well as by a constant, jealous watch of the machinations of the concealed adherents of Great Britain: many of whom they still found arrayed against them under a new name. The soldier was enabled to preserve a generous trust which cankered in the politician.¹

Among the most influential and able leaders of the democrats, was Simon Larned, who was born in 1756, at Thompson, Conn. He was an officer of merit in the revolutionary war, and at the close of that contest, he removed in 1784 to Pittsfield. From 1792 to 1812 he was high sheriff of Berkshire, and in 1804 was elected to congress to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Hon. Thomson J. Skinner. In town-affairs he took a leading part. He is described as "a man of few words, deep judgment, and of rare wit and humor."

While so many of those whose services extended back into the past century were thus in the full vigor of life, several young men, natives of the town, began about the year 1800, to take an active part in its affairs.

Dr. Childs and Rev. Mr. Allen were especially happy in sons who inherited their political and religious opinions, and defended them with ardor and ability. We briefly sketch the early life of those afterwards most prominent in town-affairs.

Thomas Allen, Jr., was born in 1769, graduated at Harvard in 1789, and was admitted to the bar in 1792. He commenced practice at Sheffield, but soon removed to his native town. In his profession, he is represented to have been "skillful, learned and eloquent;" "and also," adds his eulogist, "just and merciful." No meaningless praise in times when mercy, at least, was far from the chief attribute of the law. His temper, by nature placid and not easily ruffled, was fiery enough when roused: placable and forgiving when the immediate cause of irritation was

¹ By a typographical error in the first volume of this work, Col. Danforth's birth-place was given as "Weston." It was Williamstown.



John Allen.

removed. Earnest, unwavering and uncompromising in his political faith and conduct, a forcible and persuasive speaker, of agreeable figure and address, it is no wonder that he was the idol of the democratic party of his vicinity, who had few representatives in the legal profession. Still he was no bigot of party, and had qualities of head and heart which won him the esteem and friendship of the best among those whom he most strenuously opposed in public affairs, as was emphatically shown at the time of his death. He was elected representative in 1805, and died at Boston, while serving a second term, March 22, 1806. His last illness, which was very painful, lasted twenty-three days, during which his bedside was watched by leading men of both political parties. His funeral services were conducted by Rev. Dr. Baldwin, an eminent Baptist divine of Boston, and the most conspicuous champion of the voluntary system of supporting public-worship. His pall-bearers were his classmates, Rev. Dr. Kirkland, President of Harvard University; Rev. Wm. Emerson, D. D., pastor of the First Church in Boston, and Geo. Blake, Esq., together with Hon. Harrison Gray Otis, speaker of the House, Perez Morton, who had been the democratic candidate for speaker, and Hon. John Wells, a prominent member. Among the carriages in the funeral-procession was that of the democratic governor, Sullivan, and the remains found rest, where they still repose, in the tomb of the federal Wendells in King's Chapel burial-ground.

Jonathan Allen was born in March, 1773, and passing his boyhood amid the turmoils of the revolution and the internal troubles which followed, he received such education as could be obtained from the village-schools, and from his father, who, it will be recollected, was a scholar of more than ordinary attainments in classical and historical lore, and moreover a diligent student of political and moral economy.

With such preparation, Jonathan Allen began his business life, about the year 1795, by opening a store in the small gambrel-roofed building on the south-west corner of the Allen homestead lot. He was a man of active mind and versatile talents, which led him into various enterprises, public and private, and involved him in the varying fortunes which are the usual results of such a temperament. But he possessed in an eminent degree the family traits of energy, perseverance and elasticity of pur-



pose, which carried him safely through, or over, every difficulty. Hon. Henry Hubbard, who knew him long and intimately, described him as "sedate, but cheerful, of great liberality, impartiality and fortitude, and as exerting always a considerable, and sometimes a leading, influence in the state-legislature, of each branch of which he was several times a member." "He was one of those," added Mr. Hubbard, "who, although too young to be an actor in the scenes of the revolution, were yet molded by it in character." The opinions and feelings thus formed were intensified, by the contest in which, from his earliest youth, he saw his father engaged, against those whom, under various names, he deemed the enemies of his country's liberties. It thus happened that, although a young and busy merchant, he was early found deeply engaged in the Jeffersonian politics of the day.

Throughout his life he continued devoted to the same principles, and many of his happiest intellectual efforts were made in political addresses, either from the voice or pen, during the many years in which he was chairman of the democratic county-committee. In these addresses, as well as in those before the agricultural society and on like occasions, he displayed singular clearness and vigor of thought and expression, and a very wide range of knowledge. The large influence which he enjoyed was legitimately acquired, and judiciously exercised.

William Allen was born in January, 1874, and graduated at Harvard in 1802. In his later years he was widely known as professor in Dartmouth, and president of Bowdoin college, and as the author of several literary works; the most valuable of which was his "Biographical Dictionary," the first of its class in America, and a volume displaying very industrious research. Earnest in his convictions and little tolerant of adverse opinions, he favored strong, if not arbitrary, measures in the repression of what he considered error. With less knowledge of human nature than his brothers, he often failed of carrying his points by pressing them, not so much too strenuously as with too obvious stress. But few men excelled him in conscientious regard for duty, in genuine benevolence, in love for right and hatred of wrong, as he saw them. As a writer, his style, although somewhat prolix, was pure and scholarly. As a preceptor, he was one of the most learned in the country, in his time; but he failed as the governing-head of a college by attempting to enforce too strictly the letter of the

law, relying too little on the better traits of student character. As a clergyman, adhering strictly to the orthodox Congregational church, he preached its doctrines and administered its discipline faithfully. In 1800, he was only sixteen years old, but we shall find him a few years later defending his father in a very able pamphlet.

Henry Halsey Childs, son of Dr. Timothy Childs, and grandson of Col. James Easton, was born in 1783, and graduated at Williams college in 1802; manifesting at his graduation qualities which continued to distinguish him through life.

At that time all the faculty and, with one exception, all the trustees, were federalists, and very earnest ones. Young Childs was quite as strenuously of the opposite party, and the commencement oration, which he submitted to the president for approval, was filled with the rankest Jeffersonian democracy: little short of blasphemy in the judgment of the academic critics while his laudations of the new president, whom they regarded as an infidel in religion and a Jacobin in politics, were profuse. Of course this odious heresy was strictly interdicted. But on commencement day when Childs mounted the stage, instead of the harmless sentences which had been substituted and approved, out came the condemned heresies, trebled in force by the resentment of the young politician. "Childs! Childs!" exclaimed the astonished president. But those who knew the speaker in his later days will readily believe that no presiding officer could silence Henry Childs, with words, when he was bent upon talking. The orator went on to the end, amid mingled applause and hisses; for though his sympathizers were few on the platform, they were many on the floor.

We relate this incident simply as very characteristic of one who afterwards filled a marked place in the history of the town. A bold, self-reliant and impulsive man, it would have been strange had he not sometimes erred. Energetic, enthusiastic and generally practical, thoroughly devoted to whatever he undertook, he was for the most part successful.

We have already mentioned J. D. & S. D. Colt as commencing, in 1799, a prosperous mercantile business. Both were also men of strong personal qualities, interested and influential in town and other public affairs, and decided, although not violent, politicians of the federal school. James Denison Colt, Jr., the senior

partner, born in 1767, had in 1800 already occupied places of trust in the town-government, and won an enviable reputation, which he retained through life, as a man of sound intellect and the most correct principles both in business and in morals. Samuel Dickinson Colt, born in 1779, was in 1800 barely twenty-one years old. He was only the half-brother of his partner, being the son of Capt. J. D. Colt by his second wife, Miriam, daughter of Col. Wm. Williams; from whom he inherited a lively and mercurial disposition with somewhat of that "magnificent spirit," which, according to his epitaph, distinguished his maternal grandfather.¹

John Burgoyne Root, born in 1778, was the son of Ezekiel Root, and afforded the rare instance of a son of a royalist espousing warmly the democratic cause; resenting, perhaps, in this way the unpatriotic name which had been inflicted upon him. We shall find Mr. Root enterprising and active in business, quick to take part in the improvement of American wools, and the introduction of new manufactures. His manners were eminently pleasing and his temperament genial and kindly. Elected town-clerk in 1806, he was re-elected in 1811, and every year from that date until his death in 1838; a longer time than this office has been held consecutively by any other person.

Another citizen of influence, and one never willingly inconspicuous in public matters, was Joseph Shearer, who had married Hannah, widow of Col. Wm. Williams. Her first husband died in 1785, leaving, to satisfy the demands of his creditors, barely £175, of which £75 were absorbed in the charges of administration. His widow, however, proved to be wealthy, holding all his real estate by some previous transfer or settlement. This wealth,

¹ Capt. James Denison Colt, who had been a man of property and influence in Pittsfield almost from its first settlement, lived until 1809. The Colt family date back to Thomas Colt of Carlisle in the English county of Cumberland, whose son Thomas was chancellor of the Exchequer, and held other honorable places under Edward IV. This second Thomas died in 1476. The family traits of respect for law and established institutions, and a rigid faithfulness to public and private trusts, which distinguish the Berkshire branch of the family to this day, characterized its progenitors in the earliest record we have of them. One of its members lost an estate by adhering to the fallen fortunes of Charles I., and another refused to retain the favor of Charles II. at the sacrifice of his parliamentary duties, or to surrender to him, for any bribe, the charter of the city of Leominster, which had been committed to his charge.



Yours in your friend's
remembrance - L. B. Mearns

of course, attracted many suitors, but she maintained her independent widowhood,—a state to which she seems to have been better adapted than any other,—until she was wooed by Joseph Shearer, who, if tradition does not belie him, won the widow and her lands by the venerable equivoque of asserting that “he loved the very ground she trod on.” There remains, however, the fact that Mr. Shearer had a remarkably fine person, pleasing manners, and much adroitness; which may have made an impression upon Mrs. Williams, although she was twenty-six years his senior. But, be that as it may, their union was an unhappy one. The bride does not appear, under any circumstances, to have been exactly an angel in the household,¹ and had she been so, with the great disparity in age between the parties, the result would have been doubtful. As it was, Mr. Shearer’s polite disclaimers of impatience to be rid of his wife, sounded like irony, and she openly accused him of plotting her death by leaving an open well into which she stepped, by mounting her upon an unbroken colt, and by other such ingenious marital devices. Once he was brought to trial before Justice John Chandler Williams, but the evidence failed to sustain the charge. She lived, however, until 1821, when she died of old age at ninety-one. Mr. Shearer died in 1838 at the age of eighty-two. He was a thrifty and shrewd business man. An earnest and decided democrat, he was highly esteemed by his party as well for his subtle counsels as for his liberal contributions. In public matters he was generous—to confess the truth, ostentatiously so—and the town to this day enjoys the benefits of some of his gifts, while that which he bequeathed to relatives, when he died childless, long since passed away from those to whom he gave it, and who had little good from it.

About the year 1800, the “old hive” in the Connecticut valley, to which Pittsfield already owed so much, sent out a new migration, in which, among other worthy citizens, were three young men, who built up, each, a prosperous business, and became prominent in the affairs of the town. They were Lemuel Pomeroy, Phineas Allen and Jason Clapp.

Lemuel Pomeroy was born at Southampton, August 18, 1778.

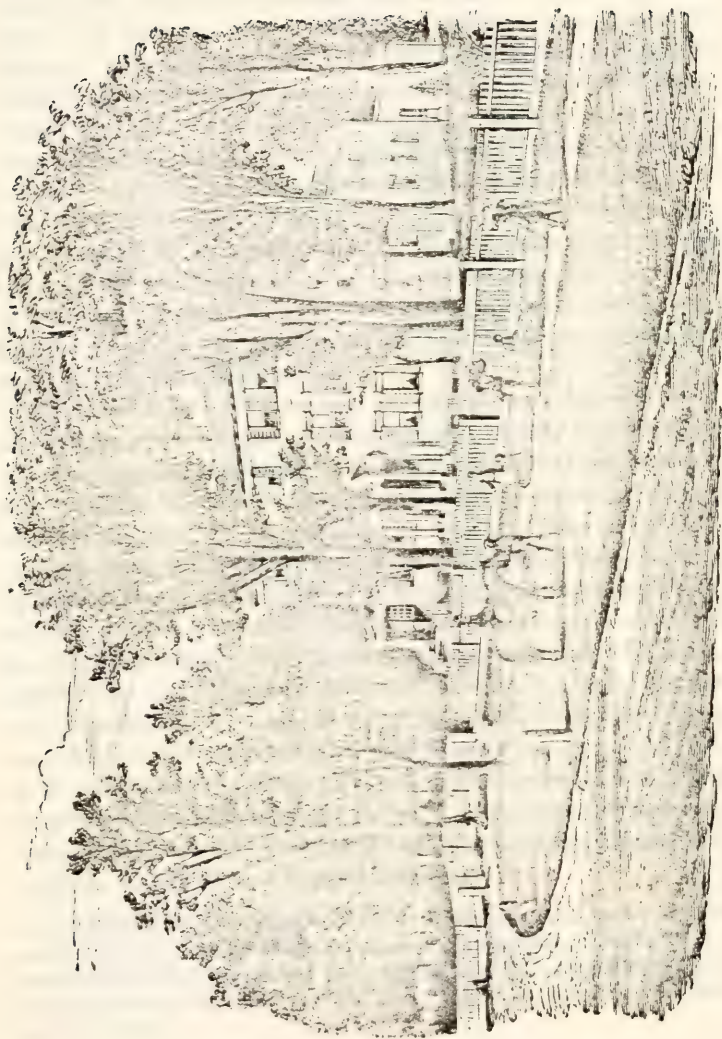
¹Of Col. Williams’s three wives, his friend Col. Stoddard said: “He married first, Miriam Tyler, for good sense, and got it; second, Miss Wells, for love and beauty, and had it; third, Aunt Hannah Dickinson, and got cheated like the devil.”

His family claim descent from Sir Ralph de Pomeroy, a favorite knight of William, the Conqueror, upon whom that monarch conferred extensive domains in the counties of Devon and Somerset, in the former of which the superb ruins of his castle of Berri-Pomeroy still attract the admiration of the tourist. Some of Sir Ralph's descendants had a less favorable experience of royal rule; and in 1636, Eltweed and Eldred Pomeroy, brothers, and represented to have been "men of liberal and independent minds," flying from the persecutions of Archbishop Laud, emigrated from Devonshire to Dorchester in Massachusetts. In 1637, following a line of migration then common, the brothers removed to Windsor in Connecticut. When Eltweed was ninety years old, he removed to Southampton with his son, Eldad, who received a grant of one thousand acres in that town, on condition that he should there establish himself as a gunsmith and blacksmith; a tract still known as "the Grant," and still in the possession of one branch of the family.

The trade of the smith, as we have before stated, embraced in colonial times many branches now transferred to special manufactories; and they were all pursued with skill and profit by successive generations of the Pomeroy, who had a knack of always being as their ancestor was represented at the first in Dorchester, "men in good circumstances and respectable standing." From Eldad in the first Massachusetts generation to Edward in the seventh, it is the boast of the family that it has never lacked a man to stand at the anvil. Eldad was called to Hampshire county for his great repute as a gunsmith. General Seth employed many men in the various branches of his art, and was as skillful in making muskets as in using them. His firearms were not only celebrated throughout the English colonies, but were held in the highest estimation by the French and Indian foe, who spared no effort to obtain them by fair means or foul.

Lemuel came to Pittsfield in 1799, bringing with him the same anvil which his ancestor had carried up the narrow Bay Path along the banks of the Connecticut, from Windsor to Southampton, and which his descendants still preserve among the most precious of their heir-looms.¹

¹Lemuel Pomeroy was sixth in descent from Eldad, viz.: *First* generation in Massachusetts, Eldad; *second*, Medad, a lawyer at Northampton; *third*, Ebenezer, who was one of the commissioners for the settlement of Sheffield,



THE HOMESTEAD. RESIDENCE OF ROBERT POMEROY, Esq.

In 1800 he married Miss Hart Lester of Griswold, Connecticut. In the same year he purchased the present Pomeroy homestead on East street.¹

The homestead-lands extended to Pomeroy avenue, and in a shop on the south-eastern corner, Mr. Pomeroy laid the foundation of his fortune; his business being, as it seems, somewhat extensive and varied, for between 1800 and 1804 we find him advertising, in addition to general blacksmithing, pleasure-sleighs, wagons and plows all of his own manufacture and in considerable quantity; and in 1804 "a large number of wooden and iron axletree wagons, and two hundred good plows, complete for use." In 1805 his shop was burned; but, although the loss was great enough to be sensibly felt by him in that stage of his affairs it did not impede his progress, and he immediately erected in its place a larger and better building, which being soon devoted chiefly to the finishing of muskets, was known in its later days as "the old musket-shop."

In character Mr. Pomeroy was one of the most remarkable of the business-men who have flourished in Pittsfield. Clear-headed, of rare judgment, bold and far-seeing in enterprise, and of inflexible purpose, his career as a manufacturer was one of almost uniform success. In town-affairs, he was generous and public-spirited, although apt to be imperious and self-asserting; resolute to have the controlling voice in such matters as interested him; which were many.² In politics being a federalist, he could not be otherwise than a very decided and ardent one. What he believed firmly, he always defended warmly. A large-hearted and large-minded man, of commanding mien and dignified presence, he was for many years among the most conspicuous figures in the history of the town. There is perhaps none to which it is more deeply indebted for its material prosperity. A very well defined specimen of the class of men sent by the Connecticut valley to Pittsfield, was Lemuel Pomeroy.

and for establishing the Indian mission at Stockbridge; an influential and active man in the public affairs of western Massachusetts; *fourth*, Seth, a noted officer in the French and Indian wars, and in the revolution; *fifth*, Lemuel, who lived and died on "the Grant" at Southampton; *sixth*, Lemuel of Pittsfield.

¹See chapter 1.

²It was one of the acute remarks of his friend, Hon. E. R. Colt, that "there would be no living with Mr. Pomeroy, if he were not almost always right."

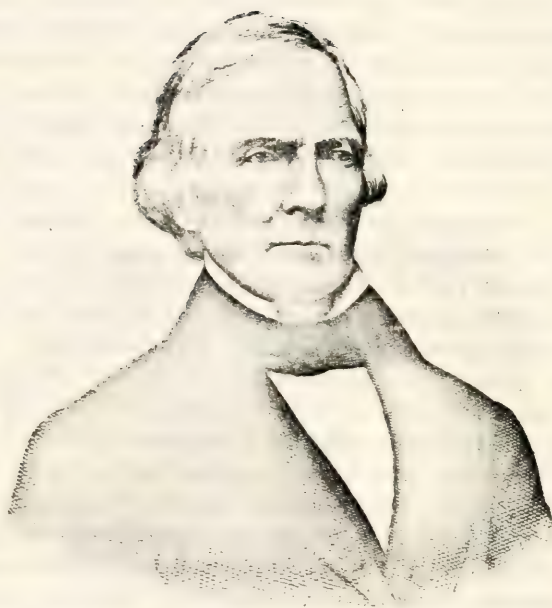
In the year 1800, came also, Phinehas Allen, as firm and fiery in his adherence to Jeffersonian democracy, as Mr. Pomeroy was in his abhorrence of it. His father, Solomon Allen, was a brother of the Pittsfield minister, and had been an officer of merit in the war of the revolution and in the militia-campaigns against the Shays rebellion.¹ Late in life he became a minister of the gospel, and although lacking in theological science, succeeded in founding four churches, with an aggregate membership of two hundred, in previously waste places in Hampshire county and western New York. In 1820, having retired from the ministry, at the age of seventy, he visited Pittsfield, called at every house, and in each, after reading a portion of scripture, and exhorting all the members of the family to serve the Lord, he prayed fervently for the salvation of their souls.

Phinehas, his oldest son, was born at Northampton, August 11, 1776. Having served his apprenticeship in the Hampshire *Gazette* printing-office, and worked one year as a journeyman in Springfield, he removed to Pittsfield in the year 1800, upon the invitation of Rev. Mr. Allen, and established the *Sun* newspaper. The four papers previously printed in the gambrel-roofed cottage, owned by Mr. Allen had been of federal politics; but had probably been favored by him for their beneficial influence in other directions. But the *Gazette* had been bitterly anti-federal, and little else. With the presidential canvass then pending, politics had become the absorbing interest of the day; and it seemed to the democrats of Pittsfield essential that the town-newspaper should be of their own faith. To none of them could this have seemed more desirable than to Rev. Mr. Allen; and he invited his young nephew to occupy the office, which the federal *Gazette* had just vacated, or been ejected from. The first number of the *Sun* was issued September 16, 1800, and was printed on a sheet thirteen inches long by eleven wide, beginning on a scale smaller than any of its predecessors, except the *Chronicle*, which was enlarged with its thirty-first number, while the *Sun* remained as at first for twelve years.

The first number was adorned with a rude cut of a rising sun, and bore the motto,

"Here all may scribble with unbounded sway,
If they will do it in a decent way."

¹See vol. I., page 403.



Engraved by J. B. Burleigh, N.Y.

Phineas Allen.

But the motto disappeared after two numbers. In his prospectus the editor gave a glowing ideal picture of what a newspaper should be, which, although widely different from that of Dr. Rush, was excellent in its way. Politics were the predominant element; but they were to be discussed with candor, fairness and impartiality. The *Sun* would defend the republican party; but would eschew calumny, slander and falsehood. The editor seems to have thought that his pledges would be best sustained by the most ardent, undeviating and unqualified support of the republican—or as it began about this time to be called—the democratic party. For sixty long years, he never admitted that there was fault or mistake in any portion of its policy. Whatever it attacked he assailed; whatever it defended, he championed. He advocated the tariff, when Judge Bacon wore homespun clothes in congress, and free trade when George N. Briggs manifested his devotion to American manufactures in the same seat in the same way. He joined with Jefferson in his denunciation of slavery, and with Buchanan, in his warnings against the evil tendencies of anti-slavery politics. But it is only just to him to say that, in following the standard of party wherever it led, his changes of opinion appear to have been sincere, and seemed to him to be called for by altered circumstances. All matters of mere policy, he subordinated to regard for the constitution; and that, as interpreted by the “resolutions of ’98.” Whatever controverted the extreme doctrines of state-rights, he considered heretical and dangerous. This was his polar star, and by this he steered, let the world go round as it would.

In town-affairs, Mr. Allen took a more zealous and active part than the columns of his paper would indicate. In the earlier efforts to restore the county-seat to Pittsfield, in particular he took an earnest and conspicuous part. Being a member of the state-legislature when this question once came up, he drew upon himself, by his ardent advocacy of the removal, the whole fire of the opposition wit, concerning which a characteristic anecdote is preserved. Discussing the question one day at the hotel-table, he was asked which he really thought was the larger, Pittsfield or London. “Pittsfield, by Heaven!” was the sturdy reply; which pleased his constituents, for it was one of the well-worn witticisms of the neighboring villagers to nickname Pitts-

field for the great metropolis, and the representative's way of meeting it seemed happy.

In business Mr. Allen was punctual, methodical and exact, to a proverb; and he would have been more distinguished for integrity and industry, had those qualities been less universal in the community of which he formed a part. In person rather below the medium stature, but lithe, symmetrical and well-knit, no one ever associated with him any idea of weakness or want of dignity.

The influence of such a man laboring persistently in one local journal, in one direction, for over half a century, we need not say, was powerful. In many families the young received almost their whole political education from the *Sun*, and many of them clung to it through life against all the more modern attractions of rival journals. It was the one unchanged thing which reminded them of the past. Itself, as a newspaper, necessarily dealing with ceaseless and often startling mutations in men and nations, it viewed them all from the democratic stand-point of the year 1800, and however essentially they actually varied, gave them color, superficially at least, from the democratic atmosphere of that era.

Jason Clapp, the remaining member of this Hampshire county triad, was born at Northampton in 1783, being the son of Ebenezer Clapp. He removed to Pittsfield in 1802, upon the invitation of his friend Lemuel Pomeroy, by whom he was employed as master-wheelwright until 1809. In that year he purchased the land now included in Clapp avenue and the building-lots adjoining that street upon the west, where he built a shop, around which afterwards grew up Clapp's carriage-factory. Of his business life and character Rev. Dr. Todd thus spoke in his funeral sermon :

He began life by serving a regular apprenticeship; receiving the almost incredibly small pay of eight dollars per year. But, so economical were his habits that, during the four years of his apprenticeship he expended only ninety-three dollars. On reaching his majority, he immediately paid off the debt of sixty dollars, thus unavoidably incurred, and at once began to assist in the support of his parents. * * I have seldom known a man, whom I could hold up with more confidence as a model for our young men to study and copy. He began on a small scale; never asking a man or a bank to loan him a dollar; never asked a note discounted, never asked a man to endorse for him; I doubt whether he was ever sued at law. Slowly, steadily, surely, he



Eng'd by E. B. & S. and J. Parlay N.Y.

Jason Clapp

advanced until he stood at the head of his business; the man whose name was a warranty, whose workmanship was as perfect as care and labor could make it; and whose production it was an honor to possess.

It may be added that, at the head of a great manufacturing establishment, Mr. Clapp had the too rare virtue of remembering that his workmen occupied the same station from which he had himself risen; and from which, very much through his example and encouragement, some of them were surely rising. It was with heart-felt truth that Dr. Todd said, "It was a melancholy but a beautiful sight, when some of these men gathered around his coffin and were his gentle pall-bearers—as if lifting the remains of a father."

The great intellectual leaders of the two political parties in the early part of the century in Pittsfield were John W. Hulbert and Ezekiel Bacon, both men of decided ability and more than ordinary eloquence. Mr. Hulbert was born at Alford, and was admitted to the bar about 1794. He commenced practice at Sheffield, but removed to Pittsfield about 1800. He was a man of brilliant intellect, of keen wit, of genial temperament and fascinating manners. His eloquence was polished but pointed, effective, and very apt to excite the ire of his opponents. His fellow federalists, who placed no bounds to their admiration of the talents of their champion, styled him "the silver-tongued," and "the Hamilton of Massachusetts;" and, in their view, this latter phrase included all that was excellent in political character.

Ezekiel Bacon was born at Boston, September 1, 1776. His father, Hon. John Bacon, had been one of the pastors of the old South church, but differing, on some theological points, with his colleague and a majority of his people, he resigned in 1775, and removed to Stockbridge, where he afterwards held many honorable places; among them those of chief-justice of the common pleas and representative in congress. He was accustomed to say that "Ezekiel went to Boston to be born;" his mother being at his birth on a visit to her old home. When the family returned to Stockbridge in the following summer, it was in the first "pleasure-carriage" that ever crossed the Hoosac mountains.

Ezekiel entered Yale college at the age of fourteen and graduated in 1794. Having read law at the law-school of Judge Reeves, in Litchfield, Conn., and in the office of Hon. Nathan Dane, he commenced practice at Williamstown in 1798; but

removed to Pittsfield in 1806. His father was a democrat of the straightest sect, and he inherited his principles in full measure. At the law-school he won the sobriquet "*le petit democrat*;" and in "*The Mirror of the Berkshire Bar*" he is enrolled as "*Young Democrat Bacon*." In 1799, he delivered a Fourth of July oration at Williamstown, which had the honor of being printed by his friends and burned by the federal students of the college; although there was nothing in it specially to provoke their ire, unless it were a scornful allusion to the tory-element in the federal party. Mr. Bacon's addresses and speeches, many of which are preserved in print, are, although earnest and decided, moderate and courteous; especially for the era at which they were delivered.

In 1806 he was chosen one of the state-senators from Berkshire, his colleague being Dr. Timothy Childs. In 1807, upon the resignation of Hon. Barnabas Bidwell, he was elected to congress, receiving every vote in Pittsfield, and almost every vote cast in the district. The federalists had no candidate, and seem to have refrained from voting. Mr. Bacon continued in congress until 1813, serving on the committee of ways and means, and being its chairman during the first year of the war of 1812. He was not a fluent speaker or very ready debater; but his speeches, as reported in the *Annals of Congress*, and in the newspapers of the day, are distinguished for fullness of information, sound logic and clear thought, which gave them great weight. He was on terms of confidential intimacy with President Madison, and numbered among his chosen friends Albert Gallatin, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, DeWitt Clinton and the other great leaders of the early democratic party; with whom he maintained correspondence long after he left congress. And it is proof of the life-long constancy of his friendships that so late as 1844 he delivered and published a lecture eulogistic of Gallatin, Madison and others of his early political associates; a tribute which was pronounced by Judge Story to be "*eminently just*." With Story, his associations were especially intimate and friendly, and continued to the death of the former. It is creditable to Mr. Bacon's judgment that, both being young men together in congress, he recognized the great qualities which afterwards rendered his friend the most eminent jurist of his day, in America at least, and by his influence with the president secured his appoint-

ment to the supreme bench, before Story knew that he was a candidate.

Ardent as was his devotion to democratic principles, he was no blind follower of political leadership. He sympathized with Madison in his efforts to avoid a war with Great Britain, and thereby incurred the distrust of the French faction of the democracy. Not insensible to the rights and interests of New England, he favored the embargo of 1807 only as a temporary measure; to him primarily, Jefferson attributed its repeal, and he shared with his friend Story the denunciations of that most arbitrary of political leaders for their course in that matter. He opposed in a vigorous and manly speech the proposition to arm the whole militia of the country at the expense of the national treasury, because under a previous law, Massachusetts and most of the northern states had supplied their troops fully, while most of the southern states had neglected to do so. That he did not continue longer at the head of the committee of ways and means was probably due to the fact that he could not be relied upon to go all the lengths which party exigencies might require. With pure, unselfish and patriotic aims; of sound and independent judgment; well read in the principles of government, and guided by full and accurate information, Ezekiel Bacon ranked high among the very best class of American legislators.

"His temperament," says a biographer, "was poetic, and he was familiar with all the standard literature of that class, and he largely indulged himself at one period of his life in poetic composition, mostly, however, tinged with deep melancholy—the *suspensio profundis* of a depressed spirit and an aching heart." It should be added that this was not the affectation of sensibility, at one time fashionable; but, although deepened by ill health, was the genuine sadness of a heart seeking earnestly for religious truth, and finding it not; for it was not until his latest years that he was able fully to recognize the truths of Christianity. In 1842 he published a volume of poems entitled "Recreations in a Sick Room," and dedicated to his old friend, Story, who acknowledged them in a touching note.¹

There were, in the excited and busy period of the town's history which we are now considering, other men whom we can see to have been of note and influence equally with some of those whom

¹ Life and letters of Joseph Story.

we have mentioned. Some of these are sketched in other connections. Of many it is impossible now to recover more of their story and character than the reader will gather from the statement of their official positions and their places upon committees. The memory of their cotemporaries, or rather those who remember them as men when they were children, describes them with monotonous indefiniteness. "A fine fellow," "A smart man," "A good man, farmer, or trader," are phrases which, when applied to half the town grow obscure. "A glorious old fellow," "A sharp one," "One who knew what he was about, I tell you," have a little more meaning; but, at the best, the judgments of childhood in such matters, unless illustrated by incidents—and incidents personally observed by the narrator—are very liable to be false, or exaggerated.

Of the generation as a whole, we have, however, a very graphic characterization, which, although it refers to a period a few years later, applies with perhaps greater force to the men of 1800–10. It is from an historical sermon delivered by Rev. Dr. Humphrey in 1857, and describes the Congregational society as he found it in 1817:

"The fathers of that day, as I knew them, were a stalwart generation, who had come over the hills from the fat valley of the Connecticut, and settled down here, to clear up the forests, trace these broad highways, and lay the foundations of society upon a stratum of the old Plymouth Rock. They were such men as Fairfield, Larned, Danforth, Childs, Williams, Ingersol, Root, Strong, Fowler, Lancton, Lawrence, the Wards, Merrill, Dickinson, Chapman, Francis, Stevens, Sacket and others."

"They were as a generation staunch, enterprising men—somewhat set in their ways, if you please; but who, despite their shibboleths, would, had the occasion called for it, have united, shoulder to shoulder, as their fathers did, in fighting for liberty to the death."

As the occasion did not require it, they did not stand shoulder to shoulder, but, in quite another attitude, face to face, employed their vigor and their valor in taking care that the liberties of the republic received no detriment from its internal enemies, as they mutually classed each other.

We should be too hasty, if we denounced their political wranglings as altogether profitless; and although they doubtless withdrew much mental energy from more economical employment, and although the material interests of the town must have suf-

fered from the lack of local harmony, still individuals and the community increased in wealth and business activity.

In the chapter specially devoted to agriculture, manufactures and mercantile affairs, it will be seen that farming was prosperous, and growing more skilful, that new branches of manufactures were introduced and became the germ of the present greatness of that interest in the town; that the merchants showed signs of thrift by building new and better stores. The carding-machines and fulling-mills were busy in preparing and finishing the products of the household-loom. The manufacture of carriages was prosperously begun. The iron forges were turning out tons of tough malleable iron, which to a great extent was converted by the smiths of the town into anchors, gun-barrels, plowshares, chains, and other products of their craft. A gun-factory was established, which contributed largely to the arming of the troops of the state and the Union. The seed of the flax which had furnished material for the linen-loom, fed the oil-mills; the ashes from the fires that cleared the fields became precious in the potash-crucible. Tanneries, for which bark and hides were then more abundant than now, enriched their owners. Beef-packing, as well as the potasheries, was a profitable source of income to the merchants. The breeding of mules and horses for the West India market was a lucrative branch of the farmer's business. Plows, scythes, nails, carding-machines, looms, silver-ware, drums, hats and combs, made up a goodly number of small manufactures. And, finally, the printing-press was in constant motion, sending out not only newspapers, but political and religious pamphlets, primers, blanks and all the multifarious issues of the job-printing office.

We have thus, in the Pittsfield of 1800-1810, a thriving agricultural, manufacturing and mercantile town of from 2,000 to 2,500 population; agitated by religious and political feuds which extended in a remarkable degree into the affairs of business and social life; but which, although they were to be deplored, did not absorb all activity of thought, or prevent a great advance of material prosperity. We may add that, sadly divided as society was, it did not hinder—and perhaps by its rivalries encouraged—an exceedingly genial social life, in which “merry England” cropped out very perceptibly above the “stratum of Plymouth Rock.”

CHAPTER VI.

POLITICAL FEUDS, AND DIVISION OF THE FIRST PARISH.

Political rancor of the age—Exaggerations of tradition—Illustrative anecdote—State of American politics—Sources of political bitterness peculiar to Berkshire—Berkshire federalists and democrats characterized—Elder Leland, Theodore Sedgwick and Rev. Thomas Allen—Obnoxious sermons preached by Mr. Allen—Woodbridge Little's letter of complaint—Mr. Allen's reply—Action of the dissatisfied—Advice of the Berkshire association of Congregational ministers—Mr. Allen annoyed by newspaper scandals—The *Berkshire Reporter*—Letter from Mr. Allen to Mr. Little—Union parish incorporated—Difficulties in organizing a new church solved by an ex parte council—Church of Union parish instituted—Names of members—Proposals for the resignation of Mr. Allen—Ordination of Rev. Mr. Punderson over Union church—Health of Mr. Allen; he preaches an election sermon at Boston; writes a historical sketch of the town and county; his death; monuments to his memory.

WHILE, as we have seen, and shall see, Pittsfield during the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century was characterized by substantial prosperity, advance in the industrial arts, and great improvements in those branches of agriculture subservient to them, and while it numbered among its citizens an unusual proportion of able men, those years in its history have become widely known in tradition for an excessive political bitterness which bisected the town in its social and business relations—and especially in those of religion—into two hostile camps, with passions more malignant, if their weapons were less fatal, than those of the battle-field.

There is a little exaggeration in all this; but tradition has here shown less than her usual proclivity to pervert facts. Her misrepresentation lies chiefly in what she has forgotten. She has neglected to preserve for us the causes which inevitably rendered this feud exceptionally personal and malignant, and has left us to believe that an excess of political rancor was more peculiar to Pittsfield than it really was. Other towns suffered nearly as

much from this baleful strife. Other religious parishes were so divided that harmony was restored, if it was restored at all—except by the healing influence of time—only by the resignation of their pastors. Indeed personal malignancy in political strife was characteristic of the times, and of all classes, from the chief-magistrate of the nation—at least during the first eight years—down to the lowest wrangler in the village bar-room. Nor was this unworthy manifestation of feeling confined to America. “How savage,” exclaims Thackeray, speaking of English political writings of the same period, “how savage the satire was, how fierce the assault! What garbage hurled at opponents! What foul blows were hit; what language of Billingsgate flung!” The village-discords of Pittsfield in 1800–1815 were therefore not altogether exceptional.

And again, there was evidently a much larger proportion of the population than the sweeping generalities of tradition would indicate, who were in a greater or less degree uninvolved in the prevailing feud; with whom politics were not an all absorbing, or controlling, consideration. Families were rarely divided by political lines; as the father, so generally were the sons. But the children of democratic and federal families, sometimes inter-married, and there is no intimation of any resultant troubles like those which befell poor Romeo and Juliet. A venerable lady tells a story of her younger days, illustrative of the rancor of political feeling, to the effect, that she with her sisters—all staunch federalists—one evening accepted an invitation to accompany certain young gentlemen to a dancing-party at some distance from their home; but reaching the scene of festivity, and finding it the house of a democrat, they sturdily refused to enter, and insisted on returning. This certainly shows a pretty intense feeling on the part of the young ladies; but, on the other hand, we must infer that either they had been receiving the attentions of democrats, or that the gentlemen, in their love for parties of pleasure, were indifferent to their relations with parties in politics. The same lady well remembers the delight with which the visits of the arch-democrat, Parson Allen, were received by the young federalists of her father’s house; although that was doubtless not during the more violent paroxysms of the prolonged quarrel.

We are then not to believe that for any long time, or that through the entire community for any time, all the courtesies of

life, and all social intercourse were suspended, and that the people of Pittsfield met each other on the street only to scowl and pass by on different sides. Such a state of things would be incredible on much better authority than that of tradition; and it is disproved by abundant testimony.

Nevertheless, although the political quarrels of Pittsfield in these years were not so exceptional, nor quite so absorbing, as tradition represents, they were sufficiently lamentable, and did possess painful peculiarities. It is true that they impeded the material progress of the town, engendered family feuds, and rent in twain the Congregational church and parish, which then comprised by far the larger portion of the population. Under their incitement malignant slanders were invented and circulated; those who ought to have been in private life united in the warmest friendship, became the bitterest enemies, and those whose abilities and influence ought to have been combined for the good of the community, wasted their powers in denunciation of each other. For it was the men of strongest mind and warmest heart, who were most deeply involved in this vain and wasteful strife.

A gentleman of sharp and just thought¹ afterwards collected some of the partisan pamphlets of the Pittsfield presses of that era, and had them bound together under the quaintly-significant title: "The Age of Folly." And, in some of its phases an age of profound folly it surely was, when passion obscured the judgment of the wisest and perverted the conscience of the most pure-minded.

There is, however, another aspect in which it is possible to view the asperities of that era. It must be remembered that there was then raging the most stupendous conflict of arms and of opinions, that ever shook the world; a conflict upon whose issue the world's whole future seemed to depend. Not only did it sway the capitals and the battle-fields of Europe, but the most remote jungles of the east trembled to the thunder of its cannon, and the inmost hamlet of civilized men in the west was agitated by the jar of its debates. It was not a question of mere territorial conquest; of the balance of national power; of commercial policy. It concerned the very basis of all government every-where. The issue was between the divine right of legitimate

¹Hon. Ezekiel R. Colt.

kings, and the right of the peoples to establish, alter or amend their constitutions. These antagonistic ideas, the world over, were contending for the mastery in a contest so desperate, and so nicely balanced, that the champions of each felt, not without reason, that the slightest aid gained or lost, might be of decisive effect. The great powers which led in the struggle adopted therefore the most unjustifiable measures to force the weaker nations from a wise neutrality. In the United States the same quarrel, translated indeed from English soil, had been so recently fought out, that when the French revolution revived it on so grand a scale in Europe, each side found a great party ready to sympathize with it. And, as the conflict had originally been more bitter and more clearly defined in Berkshire than perhaps in any other locality; so there the revived animosities were correspondingly fiercer. At first, few were willing to avow themselves in favor of actually involving the country in the war. Probably few were so minded. Peace was too precious; the friends of England, who held power, were pre-eminently prudent, and the Gallic party had no object in precipitating a crisis until they had obtained possession of the government. But in the arena of politics there went on the same conflict between old and new forms of thought and action which was fought in the campaigns of Europe; with this essential difference, that what in Europe was still revolutionary, had come in America to be simply progressive, while conservatism, if it assumed the European type or allied itself with it, was reactionary.

At bottom, indeed, among the masses of the American people, the difference of aims and opinions was much less than mutual jealousies, and the expressions of extreme but representative men, made them appear. But so long as each party earnestly believed in the evil intentions of the other, it did not matter how just that belief might be, so far as its effect on the virulence of the times was concerned. Or rather, the more erroneous the belief, the more exasperating were its effects; for each party, true to the instincts of human nature, oblivious to its own injustice, perceived and resented only that of which it was the object. Such, in general, was the state of public feeling in America during the whole period covered by the political feuds of Pittsfield, from 1790 to the close of the second war with Great Britain; varying, of course, in intensity with the varying incitements of

public events. And what was true of the general conflict, was often more intensely so of the little hand-to-hand local encounters.

But in order to show how legitimately and inevitably the dissensions we are about to relate were the outgrowth of the times, a little more than a general statement is requisite.

The fact is familiar to the reader that the constitution of the United States, as framed by the convention of 1787, was not in all its provisions acceptable either to the progressive or the conservative elements in the proposed union; and that its final adoption was secured only with great difficulty. Concessions which had in convention been reluctantly yielded, by one side or the other, to the necessity of compromise, had to be argued anew before the people,—a more unyielding tribunal; and, after all, the work, as a whole, was only accepted by the states, with the hope strongly held out that the amendments, of which most of them proposed several, would be obtained in the near future. In the state conventions the radical democracy—then known as anti-federalists—continued unconditionally to oppose the ratification.¹

The conservatives, on the other hand, while they distrusted the new form of government as without sufficient powers for its own preservation, yet saw in it an immeasurable advance upon the old confederacy, and the only escape from impending anarchy. They therefore warmly advocated its adoption; gaining thereby the name of federalists, and with it much popular favor when the successful working of the new institutions seemed to prove their superior wisdom. Their enemies, however, charged that they favored it as a cunningly-prepared stepping-stone towards a monarchical or an aristocratic state. The government was organized under the new constitution in March, 1789, and happily being administered with the same wisdom which created it, its effect upon the prosperity and happiness of the country was so manifest that all parties hastened to declare their allegiance to it. The federalists, however, continued to distrust it as too weak

¹ In that of Massachusetts Pittsfield was represented by Capt. David Bush and Valentine Rathbun, both ultra-democrats, and on the final vote Mr. Rathbun gave the voice of the town against its ratification, doubtless in accordance with the wish of his constituency. There were at that time some very able and earnest federalists in Pittsfield, and the question of the adoption of the constitution evidently excited no little ferment; but it seems to have been far less violent than the political agitations which preceded and followed it; and we have no details regarding it, even in tradition.

to meet any violent storm; the democrats still proclaimed that it was necessary to keep a vigilant watch upon its aristocratical and monarchical tendencies, and as soon as possible, to introduce into the constitution itself a check upon them. That instrument was, indeed, literally but a frame; and a frame capable, in the hands of perverse builders, of becoming a very different structure from that which was actually developed. Much depended upon the construction which might be put upon many articles by judicial and legislative decisions; much sometimes upon what the practice of the people acting through political parties should make custom.¹

Distrust as to the practical working of the constitution arose, then, not only from the uncertainty which overhangs all experiments of this nature, however honestly conducted; but also from dread of the interpretation which those in power might choose to place upon some of its clauses. "Other constitutions," said the democrats, "have been wrested from meanings as plainly worded as this, to the utter perversion of their intent; why should not ours?" And it must be confessed that this jealousy was not without reason; but it is to the credit of the federal judges and the federal majorities, that their decisions and practice were generally just, and almost always leaned to the liberal side.

The dominant party were prudent, just and moderate; the minority were for the most part men of sense, and although perhaps morbidly jealous of their liberties, had no disposition to disturb a public tranquillity which they perceived indispensable to individual as well as national prosperity; and, although, doubtless, under any circumstances the wholesome conflict between conservative and progressive ideas would have kept alive healthful political action, there is no reason to believe that the early years of the republic would have been disturbed by party quarrels of more than ordinary violence, had no incitement come from abroad, and had not the people honestly believed that the rights and liberties of America were involved with those of Europe.

Questions as to the development of natural resources, the

¹ The case of the change in the functions of the electoral college from what the framers of the constitution plainly intended it to be, furnishes a good illustration, although the subversion of a plain meaning is exceptional. Judicial, legislative and popular interpretation ordinarily took effect only where the original language was equivocal.

encouragement of manufactures, the extension of commerce, concerning the respective powers of the state and national governments, and the like, often appeared sharply; but so clearly was domestic tranquillity essential to individual and national prosperity, that even politicians of extreme views were, at least at the north, content to postpone abstract constitutional reforms until "practical inconvenience" should prove their necessity. Thus even a man of so extreme views as Theodore Sedgwick, in a letter to Peter Van Schaack, dated November, 1791, declines to agitate for a change in the judiciary, "because, if it should be attempted to reform the system by proposing an amendment, it may excite all the agitations of federal and anti-federal passions, which now seem to be dormant through all the northern and eastern states."

But, simultaneously with the organization of the federal government, the French revolution began to take definite form by the meeting of the States General and their speedy resolution into "The National Assembly." In America this first act of the grand drama was hailed with almost universal joy, as the substitution of a free constitution for an arbitrary and often grossly-tyrannical despotism. The proclamation of a French republic, although attended by excesses that awakened the fears of the more observing, was generally welcomed as bringing into closer sisterhood with the Union, the great nation which had been its ally in the war of independence; while it flattered the national pride by the sincere homage of imitating our example. Soon, however, the hideous atrocities of the reign of terror, exaggerated by report even beyond the frightful reality, excited the horror and dread of the more timid and conservative classes. In the example of France they saw the realization of their own predictions concerning the results of popular rule. All had witnessed, some had experienced in their own person, the rigors of committee-rule in the times of the revolution. It needed, they considered, only the absolute powers which similar bodies had attained in France, for the committees, or the party in which their spirit, and much of their personnel, survived, to re-enact upon American soil the tragedy which was desolating France. Jefferson, the great leader of the anti-federalists, just returned from Paris, imbued with the most radical Jacobinism, was, they averred and sincerely believed, assaulting not only the administration, but the very foundation of the gov-

ernment. His success involved their ruin. When, therefore, England became the champion of public order and established institutions throughout the civilized world, the federal became an Anglican party.

On the other hand, the anti-federalists—who soon shook off that name for the more popular appellation of republicans—while they must have shuddered at the tales of horror which every ship that crossed the Atlantic brought from Paris, Lyons, or La Vendée, were taught to believe them the inventions, in great part, of the English press; and, bad as the truth was confessed to be, to offset it with the cruelties of kings and nobles which had been endured for ages. The excesses of the republicans, they were told, were but the ebullitions of a newly-enfranchised people avenging itself for the oppression of generations; they would soon subside into a healthy tranquillity. “A few months of the Temple and the Conciergerie,” said the more violent, “are not too much to atone for centuries of the Bastille.” The slaughters by which the republic sought to exterminate its enemies, revolting as they were confessed to be, it was said—and said to Protestants of the strictest sect—were no worse than those which, by royal edict, sought to extirpate Protestantism in France. The sensual orgies and debaucheries of Robespierre, Le Bon and their fellow-fiends, devilish as they were, it was said, were no more so than those of the Parc-aux-Cerfs, or the palace of the Regent Orleans; and this was said to the sternest of republicans, who prized the honor of the simplest citizen’s wife or daughter, at least equally with that of the noblest lady. And thus, while they personally sympathized with sufferings endured by the victims of the revolution, if that sympathy affected the political opinions of the republicans at all, it was to increase their detestation for that system of government, whose prolonged tyranny had rendered so terrible a retribution inevitable. The right and the duty of the French people to reform their government, at any cost, they not only did not question, but vigorously upheld.

At home, they found the loyalists of the revolution giving the most ardent support to the federal administration, while many who had been the truest patriots in that struggle boldly avowed, or unmistakably showed, their distrust of republicanism, and their preference for the British constitution. It was easy, therefore, to revive in the democratic masses the scarcely-dormant

hatred of England, which had been engendered by a cruel war, whose story was now sedulously revived, and the more so as the British government was at the moment vigorously endeavoring to suppress free thought on her own soil. When Great Britain placed herself at the head of an alliance of despotic powers, whose avowed object was to protect the divine right of kings against all revolutions, it was easy to attribute to her an intention, should the holy alliance triumph in Europe, to give its purpose a retro-active scope for her own benefit on this side of the water; and to attribute also to the American conservatives the intention of restoring, under her protection, either the old order of things, or a new kingdom, with perhaps a cadet of the house of Brunswick on the throne. Thus ruin to themselves and their country which the federalists feared from the triumph of France, the republicans anticipated in case England and her allies, by victory in Europe, became arbiters of the world's destiny: and so the Anglican party in America was matched by a Gallic.

The usurpation of Napoleon made but little change in the relations of these parties to each other. Military despotism was not more pleasing to the conservatives than democratic license; and with the republicans the emperor's victories over the objects of their hatred more than atoned for his treachery to the republic of their hopes.

There was, to be sure, a third party, or rather a third class of minds, which included some of the greatest leaders of the early federalists, and whose wiser statesmanship foresaw, what actually happened, that when the European conflict should end, victor and vanquished would have so exhausted each other that they would be compelled to leave the rest of the world at peace to pursue its own way to its own better future. Their policy was, under the protection of a strict neutrality, to augment the wealth and harmonize the government of the country, to organize a sufficient naval and military force to protect the coast against sudden and desultory inroads of either belligerent, and patiently wait the event. Happily for the country this policy ruled in the administration of Washington, and measurably in that of John Adams. The insolence of French ambassadors and emissaries was rebuked, and the piracies of the French fleets resisted, with dignity and effect, while entangling alliance with England was avoided. Commerce flourished, manufactures in-

creased, and agriculture found a lucrative market in the ports of both belligerents.

There were few politicians of name, so hardy as to advocate direct interference in the European quarrel at the expense of war. Still the deep sympathy of the federal party with England could not be mistaken. It was constantly manifested in the comments of its journals on foreign affairs, and in the remarkably hearty support which its members gave to the enforcement of the neutrality laws, as against France. And even less could the partiality of the republicans for the French cause be concealed, while they did their best to make those laws a nullity in its behalf, and while their journals constantly denounced Washington and Adams as tyrants and despots, for the most necessary measures in support of the dignity and independence of the government. These journals, by-the-bye, were often edited by foreigners, banished from their own country for the extreme radicalism of their teachings, who infused into their columns the vindictiveness of exile in addition to the bitterness of party spirit. The hatred of Great Britain cherished by the most unrelenting revolutionary whig was tame compared with the rage of the radical just driven from his home for a too ardent expression of his opinions.

But it would lead us too far from our purpose to enumerate all the elements which went to envenom the seething caldron of political hatred between the outbreak of the French revolution and the close of the war of 1812. What concerns us here are the causes which gave to the political contests of Pittsfield and Berkshire county an acrimony, exceptional, at least at the North, even in that era.

Of these the smoldering feuds, which had come down from the days of committee-rule, have already been mentioned. Even before the close of the war, it will be remembered, the conservative whigs and the tories had fraternized in behalf of what they considered law and order. The same community of sentiment afterwards combined the same elements still more intimately in the federal party, and elevated to office some who had been most obnoxious during the war. An instance which excited the warmest indignation of the republicans was the appointment by President Adams of John Stoddard, a son of the tory Israel Stoddard, postmaster of Pittsfield, in place of Col. Joshua Danforth,

a gallant officer of the revolution, who had been appointed by Washington when the office was established in 1794.

The treatment of the old soldiers was indeed in the minds of the masses a source of grievous complaint against the federalists, who numbered among their ranks few who had seen active service, except when the militia were called out on some sudden emergency. The discharged soldier, returned from camp with the vices contracted in long service far more conspicuous than the virtues for whose display no opportunity now offered, appeared much less a hero than he did when the terror-stricken community begged his services. The man who had passed the best years of his life in the service of a bankrupt country was a far less respectable person than he who had seized the opportunities of the war to enrich himself. And the federal party cared for none but respectable persons.

The affectation of a social superiority and contempt for the masses on the part of some of the federal leaders in Berkshire, furnished a source of constant irritation, and the democratic writers retaliated by enlarging upon the vulgarity and coarseness of active members of that party, upon the meanness of their parentage, and the sources from which they derived their birth. "A beggar's brat" was the pleasant epithet applied to a man of wealth and culture; and another was delicately characterized as "a coarse, vulgar and illiterate fellow who sought position by clinging to the coat-tails of men who made use of and despised him." When there was a spice of truth in these assaults they were not soon forgotten or easily forgiven.

Hon. Theodore Sedgwick of Stockbridge was the great leader and representative man of the Berkshire federalists, and we present a portrait of him, drawn by the hand of his daughter, the distinguished author, as giving a vivid idea of the politics and political sentiment of his day.

I was a child at the period of the great ferment occasioned by the decline of the federal party and the growth of the democratic party. My father had the habit of having his children always about him, and we had so strong a sympathy with him that there was no part of his life which we did not partake. I remember well looking upon a democrat as an enemy to his country, and the party as sure, if it prevailed, to work its destruction. I heard my father's conversation with his political friends, and in the spontaneous expressions of domestic

privacy, and I received the impression then (and looking back I feel assured of its correctness) that the federal party loved their country, and were devoted to it as virtuous parents are to their children. It was to my father what selfish men's private affairs are to them, of deep and ever-present interest. It was not the success of men, or the acquisition of office, but the maintenance of principles on which, as it appeared to them, the sound health and true life of their country depended. They dreaded French influence—they believed Jefferson to be false, the type of evil—they were a good deal influenced by old prestige—they retained their predilections for Great Britain. They hoped a republic might exist and prosper, and be the happiest government in the world, *but not without a strong aristocratic element*; and that the constitutional government of Britain was the safest and happiest government on earth, I am sure they believed."

"But firm to the experiment of the republic, they had no treasonable thought of introducing a monarchy here. Their misfortune, and perhaps the inevitable consequence of having been educated loyal subjects of a monarchical government, was a thorough distrust of 'the people.' I remember my father, one of the kindest-hearted of men, and most observant of the rights of all beneath him, habitually spoke of the people as 'Jacobins,' 'sans-culottes,' and 'miscreants.' He—and in this I speak of him as the type of the federal party—dreaded every upward step they made, regarding their elevation as a depression, in proportion to their ascension, of the intelligence and virtue of the country. The upward tendencies from education, and improvements in the arts of life were unknown to them. They judged of the people, as they had been, as were the greasy unwashed multitude of Rome and of Shakespeare's time—as they are now for the most part in Europe—utterly inexperienced in government, incapable of attaining to its abstractions, or feeling its moralities."¹

This portraiture of the political character and sentiments of Judge Sedgwick, drawn by the loving hand of a daughter, well qualified to comprehend and describe them, are precisely such as were attributed to him and his associates by the Pittsfield republicans of 1800; and it is not strange that they believed that men with such views would seize the first opportunity, or make one, to establish here the form of government which they deemed the "happiest and safest on earth." It is barely possible that some chivalrous sense of honor might have held a man like Judge Sedgwick "firm to the experiment of a republic;" but it is clear that he would have been a most unsafe person to decide when

¹ Life and letters of Miss Catherine M. Sedgwick.

that experiment had failed. Probably no party ever numbered among its leaders a larger proportion of men distinguished for honor and integrity than the federal; but they were politicians for all that; and it would have been strange indeed if, finding themselves strongly entrenched in power, they had not availed themselves of it, to substitute their ideal of a perfect constitution for the democratic institutions which they held to be so fearfully dangerous to all that was good in government, society and religion. The most impartial judgment must concede that the Pittsfield republicans had good reason to consider their opponents as the enemies at heart of free institutions.

Nor could the masses of the people be expected to cherish the most amicable feeling towards gentlemen who held them in such estimation as Judge Sedgwick did. It doubtless seemed to Berkshire men an unjust thing to be characterized by those who had lived among them all their days, not by their own lives and actions, but by an ideal picture of the people of other times and countries—and exaggerated even as to them—which Shakspeare had placed in the mouths of some of the least admirable of his public characters. Possibly had the federal leaders studied their neighbors a little more candidly, they might have understood them better, interpreted Shakspeare more correctly, and led their party to a less ignominious fate.

To the flax of such a party as this, the Pittsfield democracy was the natural fire. Those who have followed us in our account of Rev. Thomas Allen, and his associates, from the opening of the revolution, will readily conceive that they had little toleration to bestow upon opponents like these. Hating the name of king with a fiercer hatred than Brutus ever did, they believed, and had good reason to believe, as Miss Sedgwick's testimony shows, that the federalists desired to erect a monarchy in America, and it would have been too much to expect them to trust to the personal honor of the leaders, that they would not seek to gratify that desire. Nourishing even morbid memories of the wrongs done their country by Great Britain, they found their adversaries cherishing an almost fanatical affection for her. Looking forward with the hope of an even more liberal constitution, they found themselves confronted by efforts to establish a still "stronger" government.

Indoctrinated early by the grand republican writers of the

English commonwealth; in later years stimulated in their love of a liberal government by the pamphleteers, the orators and the events of the revolution; in age their blood was fired by the flaming columns of the Jeffersonian newspapers, and by sympathy with the great conflict between legitimate and revolutionary rule in Europe. Veterans of a third of a century, the older leaders were as ardent, as inflexible and as unforgiving as they had been in youth, firmly believing that they upheld the same good old cause against its old enemies.

In 1791 the democracy of Berkshire received new inspiration and vigor by the return from Virginia, where he had resided for several years, of Elder John Leland, of Cheshire, a Baptist clergyman of unusual powers and of vehement feeling. Mr. Leland was in many respects a remarkable man. Of bold, clear and original thought, he reasoned unflinchingly upon all subjects, religious and secular, from the evidence in his possession, to logical conclusions, whatever they might be. And whatever he fully believed, he proclaimed with a rugged and sometimes quaint eloquence, which was exceedingly convincing to such audiences as he addressed. In Virginia he had become the intimate friend of Jefferson and other great leaders of the national democracy, by whom he was highly esteemed; and on his return to Berkshire he formed a link of more immediate connection between his conferees in that county and the central councils of the party. And this communication was maintained by his frequent friendly and professional visits to the Old Dominion. The injustice done to the Baptists and other dissenting Christians by the laws of Massachusetts, to which the great body of the democrats were opposed, still further embittered him against the federalists who—with a few exceptions, principally Episcopalians—strongly supported them. This grievance was a frequent theme of his discourses.

Mr. Leland spoke often in Pittsfield both upon religious and political subjects, and, his liberalism, in regard to both church and state government being about as extreme as it well could be, the effect of his teaching in this form, as well as in his constant correspondence with the *Sun*, may well be imagined. One result to which they largely contributed was perfect harmony in the Baptist and Methodist churches, which was secured by making their members nearly or quite unanimous on the democratic side.

In the Congregational, or town, parish, unhappily, no such harmony was attainable. A majority of the church, and a very large proportion of the wealthier members of the parish, were federalists, and had long sat uneasily under their pastor's introduction of political subjects into his "pulpit discourses." In common with other clergymen of the revolutionary era, and as effectively as any, he had preached the gospel of liberty. From the pulpit he had also denounced the non-constitutional government of Massachusetts previous to 1781, and afterwards the Shays rebellion. He had also, in the same manner, doubtless opposed the adoption of the federal constitution; for in 1788, we find his "interesting himself in his official capacity in political affairs," alleged as one of the causes of the dissensions in the town and parish."¹

A reconciliation by formal vote of the town, and a covenant of peace for the future, averted at that time the threatened disruption of the church and parish, and Pittsfield partook of that rest from federal and anti-federal passions, noted by Theodore Sedgwick as existing in 1792. These halcyon days continued—although they began to be much disturbed during the presidential candidacy, and first years of the administration of John Adams—until the smoldering passions were roused in more than their original fury by the famous "resolutions of '98," passed by the legislature of Kentucky, and, in a still more startling form, by that of Virginia.

These resolutions, which had been drafted by Thomas Jefferson, immediately became the corner-stone of the democratic party, while they excited the utmost abhorrence of the federalists. Mr. Allen received them as the old war-horse hears the sound of a trumpet. From the date of the declaration of independence, he had been among the most devoted of Mr. Jefferson's admirers and adherents. He regarded him as the champion of civil liberty, whose cause, in 1798 as in 1776, he considered identical with that of religious freedom and protestant Christianity. Federalism, aiming at monarchy, he held to be the arch-enemy of the one, and consequently of the other of these chief objects of his devotion; and to do battle valiantly against this foe of human rights, he thought the first of duties towards both God and man.

¹See vol. I., page 418.

Bold attacks upon this political monster with him covered a multitude of sins, leading him to condone the avowed deism of Thomas Paine, and indignantly deny the infidelity which was one of the favorite charges of the federal press against Mr. Jefferson.

Holding these views, Mr. Allen was unwilling to relinquish the right to discuss, or at least to express his opinion upon, public affairs, in the pulpit. This was a privilege which had always been conceded to, and held dear by, the New England clergy, from the days of the Pilgrims down; and it was in Mr. Allen's time freely exercised by most of his clerical brethren, federal as well as democratic; and in regard to many subjects—such as slavery and temperance, is constantly used by the clergy to this day.

And, if it was, and is, justifiable and praiseworthy for the pulpit to advocate what the preacher deems right, and to denounce what he believes wrong, in matters such as these; then it was certainly at least excusable in Mr. Allen that he, "in his official capacity," took ground against a party which considered the elevation of the people as a misfortune greatly to be deprecated, and which might be reasonably expected to defeat it so far as it had the power. In the light of the present day, we suspect that there are many who would agree with him in counting such an organization, as to that particular, "oppgnant to the gospel of Jesus Christ," however eminent its members might be for piety. And there are few who, if they could find a political administration, the corner-stone of whose policy was the elevation of all men, would think it blasphemy to style it a Christocracy, as Mr. Allen is said to have characterized the government of Mr. Jefferson.

We do not, of course, here pretend to decide whether Mr. Allen's estimate of the rival parties of his day was correct or otherwise, but merely to show that he endeavored zealously to perform his duty, as a citizen and a Christian minister, as from his stand-point it appeared clear to him; and that his opinions were not the result of prejudice, or of old feuds, but were reasonably warranted by the character and utterances of the leading men of the antagonistic party, at least in his immediate vicinity. Nor do we undertake to judge of the abstract propriety of introducing political matter into the pulpit; but simply to remind

the reader that such has been almost the uniform practice of all religious denominations in New England, with the exception of the Episcopalians. There was nothing therefore out of the usual course, in the merely preaching of politics by the Pittsfield pastor. The ferment which arose from it, seems to have been occasioned by the fact that the doctrines which he preached were not those of the wealthier portion of his people, or of the great majority of the churches of New England, who looked upon Mr. Jefferson as the foe of religion as well as of sound government.

Another source of dissatisfaction with Mr. Allen on the part of the federalists was his intimate relations with the *Pittsfield Sun*, which were described in a previous chapter. His printed articles were more pronounced in their partisan character than his sermons, and his federal parishioners, not unnaturally, when the phraseology was similar, interpreted many paragraphs in the Sunday's discourse, which would otherwise have had only a general application, by the light thrown upon them from the columns of the *Sun*. Unfortunately, also, as his articles usually appeared editorially or over a *nom de plume*, some, whose authorship he afterwards disclaimed, were ascribed to him.

In this feverish state, affairs stood with the parish of Pittsfield and its pastor, on Thanksgiving day, 1802, when the first of four sermons of which special and formal complaint was afterwards made, was preached. In this production, the administration of Mr. Adams was most unfavorably contrasted with that of Mr. Jefferson. The federalists also charged it upon the preacher as a sort of blasphemy, that he had "likened the latter to the Savior of the world, in that, 'being reviled, he reviled not again;'" although it would be difficult, since all men are required to form themselves upon the likeness of the Redeemer, to detect the sin in believing and declaring that one man, even though the head of a party, had in a single particular, in some degree, modeled himself in that likeness. That Mr. Jefferson had reached this state of Christian and non-resistant meekness is more to be doubted.

The second of the specially-arraigned sermons was preached in April, 1803, upon the fortieth anniversary of Mr. Allen's settlement in Pittsfield. This discourse, like the first, contrasted the administrations of Adams and Jefferson, representing, as the friends of Mr. Adams alleged, that the former "was opposed to

the gospel and to the happiness of the people; and thanking God that the preacher had lived through it to the present glorious period" of democratic triumph and rule. "He declared," said the federal pamphleteer, "that our government was a Christocracy, and that oppugnation to it was oppugnation to the gospel of Christ; adding: 'We are not party-men but opposed to aristocratic domination.'"

Rev. William Allen, in his pamphlet defense of his father printed in 1809, claimed that the expressions quoted had reference to republican institutions generally, as established by the American constitution, and that the application of them to particular parties or politicians was an unwarrantable assumption of jealous minds. The federalists sustained their interpretation by citing the context, and the author's opinions "as openly and plainly expressed in conversation, and in the columns of the *Sun*."

Mr. Allen's sermons were written in short-hand, and not always fully even in that. Often in the heat of delivery, he introduced glowing extemporaneous passages, and it is probable that in the sermons of which complaint was made he may thus have used language which he avoided in the calmness of his study. But we have noted his habit of identifying political with religious heresy, and the tenacity with which he clung to the old privilege of the Congregational clergy, of rebuking one as well as the other in the pulpit. This is the simple key to his whole course in this controversy; and, however carefully his words may have been chosen, there can be little doubt that his hearers made the proper application of them. If he erred in any of his dealings with his parishioners, his true and sufficient apology must be sought in the intense ardor and earnestness of his devotion to free institutions and whatever tended to the elevation of his fellow-men.

The third sermon of the offensive series was preached by Mr. Allen upon the death of his son, Thomas, whose life is sketched in the preceding chapter. It was printed, and does not seem to bear out the character ascribed to it by the federalists; but, on the contrary, to have been a most solemn and touching funeral discourse, such as might have been expected from a father mourning his first-born and well-beloved son.

In March, 1807, the dissatisfied members of the parish and church appointed a committee consisting of Woodbridge Little,

Joseph Fairfield, Ashbel Strong and Eli Maynard, who addressed to their pastor a "letter of remonstrance," setting forth their grievances arising from these sermons. It was written by Mr. Little, and shows that his pen had lost none of its sharpness since he employed it in behalf of his brother-loyalists in the early days of the revolution.¹

The following extract contains the gist of all the complaints against Mr. Allen :

"In the sermon delivered soon after the death of your son, as it was preached, you appeared more disposed to deliver a political harangue, calculated to affect the approaching election, than to afford consolation to his afflicted relatives and mourning friends, or instructions from such an instance of mortality, to the congregation at large. Your sermon next preceding the April election in 1806—the text of which was, "And no man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come,"—was plainly an offensive political and electioneering discourse, in the improvement of which you alluded to the idea that our wicked rulers were permitted, in this state, to be continued over us because at the previous election their hour for dismissal had not yet come; yet you urged to perseverance to the end, and foretold that the coming election would effect the looked-for change. Though in this discourse your language was not explicit, yet it was clearly understood by the audience.

Your discourses generally from February, 1806, to the time of your going to Boston in May, were constantly interlarded with politics. Your sermon on the Sabbath next after the last New Year's day was most pointedly irritating and insulting, and has caused very general uneasiness in the town. Your conduct on the 4th of March current, and the toast you then gave and repeated—"No compromise with federalists, no concurrence with neutrals,"—we consider as drawing the sword against us and throwing away the scabbard. Your sermon on the Sabbath after, we view as a pointed declaration that your future conduct should comport with that sentiment; for you then knew of our complaints against you, and our uneasiness on that account, yet you asserted that, for forty-three years past, you had preached nothing but

¹ Mr. Little stated at this time, that "he had always been the friend of Mr. Allen and his family;" but Hon. Ezekiel Bacon, a competent witness, wrote to Hon. H. C. Van Schaack as follows: "Mr Little was a lawyer by profession, I believe of quite respectable standing, and I think king's attorney for the county when the revolution came on. His town and county were mostly very zealous whigs, particularly the clergyman of the parish, Rev. Thomas Allen, who then, and also in the federal and democratic times, pursued Mr. Little, as he and his friends, at least, thought, pretty warmly and inexorably. However that might be, *there was no love lost between them.*"

Christ and Him crucified, or truths and doctrines therewith connected; and that you should pursue the same line or manner of preaching in future, notwithstanding the menaces of your opposers: which clearly imports, either that you had been menaced on account of preaching such doctrines, or that you consider all your political preaching as consonant therewith; neither of which is admitted." * * * "It gives us no little uneasiness that, while our feelings are thus harassed up and lacerated by your public discourses—while many of your own political adherents are dissatisfied with such sermons, and some of them have told you so—while too many of the uncandid and injudicious are indecently grinning their smiles of approbation, to the disturbance of public worship, and while it is not an unusual thing to hear them, leaving the house, declare that 'the parson has given the federalists a proper dressing to-day,'—you are declaring that you do not preach on political subjects, yet at other times with a strange inconsistency, you have boldly declared that you considered republicanism, or democracy, as exhibited in the administration of Mr. Jefferson, to be the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We complain of your publications in the *Sun*, and more particularly that 'on the death of Hamilton,' and also that 'on the execution of Wheeler.'¹

"We complain of your giving public notice in the meeting-house, on the Sabbath day, that the 4th of March would be celebrated in this town as a day of thanksgiving and praise, etc., and of your introduction at a conference-meeting on the evening of the 3d of March, of the political song which was to be sung by your party on the day following."²

This extract will give a vivid idea of the temper of the times,

¹ The article upon the death of Hamilton was exceedingly severe in its criticism of that greatest leader and idol of the federal party, and represented his death to have been a divine judgment. The article upon the execution of Wheeler, who was hanged for rape committed upon his own daughter, bitterly censured the federal governor of Massachusetts for not commuting his sentence to imprisonment for life. Rev. Wm. Allen does not expressly deny his father's authorship of these articles; but he states that of six articles in the *Sun*, including these, which were attributed by the federalists to him, three, at least, were not written by him. He maintains, however, his father's right to have written them, and explains with regard to the Wheeler article, that he was, with thousands of others, strongly opposed to the punishment of death except for murder. In regard to the amelioration of the laws, the Pittsfield minister was, from the first to the last, an earnest reformer.

² This charge was reduced by Rev. Wm. Allen to the fact that his father gave permission to rehearse the piece in the school-house, where the meeting was held, after the congregation had been dismissed, and that he invited those who wished to remain and listen.

as well as of the complaints made against Mr. Allen. He replied in the following letter:

PITTSFIELD, March 31, 1807.

To Woodbridge Little and Ashbel Strong, Esquires, Mr. Joseph Fairfield and Mr. Eli Maynard, committee from the aggrieved part of my flock:

GENTLEMEN: Woodbridge Little has drawn up, with the assistance of Mr. Williams and others, a paper containing false and malevolent charges against your pastor, which you have signed as being true.

Two things I request of you.

1. That you would lay said paper of charges before your constituents whom you represent, and that they do not condemn me as guilty of them, unheard; nor scourge a man that is an American, uncondemned.

2. You say in your paper, that you shall be ready to accept of me adequate and reasonable satisfaction, corresponding with the nature and equity of the case; but have left me wholly in the dark as to what you shall be pleased to deem adequate and reasonable satisfaction. If I do not know what my people want of me, how shall I be able to gratify their wishes? You will, therefore, be pleased to tell me what satisfaction will be agreeable to you. Do you desire any *pecuniary* satisfaction? If so, how much will satisfy you? Or do you desire a confession from me? You will dictate one for me and send it to me. Otherwise I shall not be able to ascertain what will satisfy you. Or do you want a promise in respect to my future preaching? You must express to me the nature and extent of such promise—for you may call anything and everything political.

You will, therefore, expressly and clearly define the restraints you design to put me under in my preaching, and substitute your *consciences* and mandates in the room of mine. Be pleased to satisfy my mind on these topics in order to enable me to give you that adequate and reasonable satisfaction, for my manifold offenses, which you demand.

I can do nothing on that subject 'till I hear from you again.

I am, gentlemen, with due respect, your sincere friend and affectionate pastor,

THOMAS ALLEN.

A full meeting of "the dissatisfied" voted this reply "unsatisfactory," and appointed Mr. Little with four others to request Mr. Allen to call a church-meeting, and, if they could agree, unite with him in calling a mutual council to hear and advise the conflicting parties; otherwise to take the proper measures for calling an *ex parte* council.

Mr. Allen declined to unite in calling a council "the way not

being properly prepared for it,"¹ and the dissatisfied, through a committee of which Mr. Little was again chairman, asked the advice of the Berkshire Association of Congregational ministers, which met at Lenox on the third Tuesday of June. This body made the following response:

"GENTLEMEN: This association feel it a very delicate matter to give advice in the case you have stated to us, because the official character of the pastor of the church in Pittsfield is concerned in it; but, reflecting on the present unhappy and threatening state of the church, we have been influenced to converse together on the subject, and now communicate to you the result of our deliberations.

"We are of opinion that for any members of the church to unite together, or with any others, in measures which implicate the character of your pastor, either as unchristian or imprudent, is an unjustifiable step. If any of the brethren have done this we recommend it to them to embrace the earliest opportunity to acknowledge to the pastor their fault. If, however, difficulties threatening the peace of the church and the town should still subsist, it is our opinion that the brethren should act agreeably to the rule prescribed by the Head of the Church in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, and take the private steps of discipline with their pastor. If these steps should not produce the desired effect in bringing about a reconciliation, we advise the aggrieved brethren to take no other steps in a matter of so much importance, without having the counsel of able and wise men.

DAVID PERRY, *Moderator.*

ALBERT SAMUEL SHEPARD, *Scribe.*

Lenox, June 17, 1807.

Mr. Allen's friends took exception to this paper on the ground that it was so expressed as "to lead the seceding members of his church to think that he was worthy of discipline," thus in fact condemning one of their ministerial brethren unheard, and without even a statement in writing of the things laid to his charge. On this latter ground, indeed, Rev. Mr. Perry of Richmond, although a federalist, and although he signed the proceedings as moderator, protested against them. The complainants, on the contrary, maintained that their irregularity in failing to take the preliminary gospel-steps of discipline was merely technical, and that they had been led into it by Mr. Allen's own request that the committee should make their communications to him in writing.

¹This phrase alludes to a technical difficulty, which will appear in the progress of the controversy.

To this again it might well have been replied, that the mode of procedure enjoined in the gospel, according to St. Matthew, contemplated as the essential first step, the private action of an individual, and that the very existence of a committee pre-supposed a violation of covenant obligations in forming a union for combined action ; thus destroying the privacy which the Head of the Church had ordained, in order to prevent the obstacles which the publicity of a quarrel inevitably interposes to reconciliation. Mr. Allen and his son laid great stress upon this irregularity of procedure, and the former based his refusal to submit the matters in controversy to a church-meeting, on the ground that their introduction was barred by a by-law requiring that there should be first filed a certificate that the prescribed gospel-steps had been taken without effect.

Mr. Little had always considered it improper to deal with the pastor of a church, in a case of alleged misconduct, as with a private member, and "after careful deliberation had formed the opinion that it was regular and expedient to confer with Mr. Allen through a committee;" a view which seems also to have obtained with a minority of the Berkshire Association, repugnant as it is to the genius of Congregationalism.

The expediency of such a course seemed, however, much more apparent than its regularity ; and whatever rightfulness pertained to it arose from the circumstances of this particular case, rather than from any distinction recognized in Congregational usage between pastor and people. Variation from the ordinary method of procedure was justified, if at all, by these facts : First, that the original affront was given to a party, and not specially to any individual, however much resentment for it might have rankled in individual breasts. Secondly, the offense was publicly given, and the anger which it aroused was immediately as publicly manifested ; and thus, while the combined action of those aggrieved was natural, the privacy enjoined in the first of the "gospel-steps" was in the nature of the case impracticable. It was only an obstacle to the amicable adjustment, which all professed to desire, that one party sought to enforce, and the other pretended to comply with, precepts which, if they had ever, in some remote stage of the controversy, been applicable, had long ceased to furnish a guide in the pursuit of peace ; precepts which, whatever may have been the letter of the law, could

no longer be enforced or obeyed. The very attempt to hold communication under the fraternal forms and affectionate phraseology of Christian brotherhood, seems a mockery, if not a profanation, when the whole substance of the correspondence proves that—however honestly the parties may have persuaded themselves to the contrary—the relations of pastor and parishioner, of Christian with Christian, had long been lost and absorbed in those of democrat and federalist.

The awkward attempt of Mr. Little to put himself right on the record, in accordance with the advice of the Berkshire Association will illustrate the absurdity of the position. He thus relates the manner of his confession to his pastor :

“In my conversation with Mr. Allen I intimated no regret that I had engaged in the affair [the withdrawal from attendance on his preaching] but informed him that it proceeded from pure and honest motives, from regard to the peace and unity of the town, and to prevent a division; not from any malice or ill-will towards him. That I had always been friendly to him and his family. But I finally told him that, *if the particular mode of proceeding which was pursued gave him offense*, I was sorry for it and asked his pardon; that it *might* be erroneous—not that I was convinced of it—but did not pretend to be infallible. Indeed I meant to convey the idea, that a party might be honest in his purposes, and yet take erroneous measures to obtain them. If I had done so, I was sorry.”

In this statement, while Mr. Little lays down some very sound general truths, it is clear that he does not consider himself to have been at all in the wrong. Mr. Allen was quite right in regarding his acknowledgments, guarded as they were with qualifications from beginning to end, as in no sense a confession of injury done his pastor. Yet it was all that he could truthfully and conscientiously have said. Here, as throughout the prolonged controversy, it is apparent that the parties had removed themselves to such widely-separated stand-points, in the all-absorbing questions of politics, that unity, even in the church, was simply impossible.

While this diplomatic correspondence was passing, rumors and suspicions, taking the form of assertion, and even malicious stories, the product of pure invention, found their way into the town-newspapers, were gravely believed by the partisan-readers on each side, and sadly increased the malignancy of the strife.

One of the grosser and more unfounded of these calumnies will serve to illustrate their character. In July, 1808, Governor Gore, making the tour of the state, with much pomp and circumstance, reached Berkshire, and visited its principal towns; Pittsfield twice. On his second visit he was honored with a salute of seventeen guns; the buildings on Park square were illuminated, and the leading gentlemen of both political parties paid their respects to him personally. But, during the night, some democrats of the baser sort prepared effigies representing him, which were burned on the square. This "wretched transaction," as it was rightly termed by Rev. Wm. Allen, was severely and sincerely reprobated by his father; but the next number of the *Reporter* declared that, "after strict enquiry" it had "found that three persons were the instigators and managers of this infamous riot," and that, of these, Rev. Thomas Allen was one. Descending to particulars, the *Reporter* said: "It is presumable that one of the effigies was furnished by Parson Allen; it is *certain* and *we aver* it as an undeniable fact that two of his boots were burned upon one of them. The parson was unfortunate in one circumstance. He ordered his son to take an old pair of boots, which he said 'would do;' but the son, in haste to execute the commands of his reverend father, took, in the dark, one of an old, and one of a new, pair, and they were burned."

Rev. Wm. Allen, whose word is unimpeachable, declares that there was not one particle of truth in the whole story. His father went to bed that night at his usual hour, and knew nothing of the affair until the next day. No article for an effigy was taken from his house. One of Mr. Allen's sons demanded from the editor of the *Reporter* the name of his informant, but it was refused. Mr. Allen, himself then wrote to him, requiring a retraction of the whole story; but this too, the editor, after consulting his friends, refused, and declined to print the letter, on the pretense, that it contained a charge that the paper had, from its establishment, followed the writer with personal abuse, slander and falsehood.

Many of the newspaper-attacks upon Mr. Allen were, like the above, pure fabrications. Others were perversions and exaggerations of things actually said and done by him.

Mr. Allen being now sixty-six years old and in broken health, believed that the enemies which he had made in his more vigor-

ous days were taking advantage of his age and infirmities to avenge their old griefs; a supposition in which he was strengthened by the fact that the leaders of the opposition were many of them men, or the sons of men, whose "handling" as tories he had approved, or perhaps incited; and that writers in the *Reporter* went back to the time of the revolution to find cause of complaint against him. Under these provocations, and the "dissatisfied" having already left his ministry and set up a separate place of worship, Mr. Allen addressed the following letter to Woodbridge Little, shortly after the latter's "confession:"

PITTSFIELD, July, 1807.

Sir—To reclaim a brother who is in fault, to promote the cause of religion, and support the honor of God, is the end of church-government. In a late conversation we had together, you made known to me your disapprobation of the part you had acted in forming a combination in town to forsake my ministry and set up a separate worship, and so to perpetuate a division among us. I enquire whether the honor of religion and the nature of the case do not require that your sense of this matter should be made known to the public; for it is a matter that has not been done in a corner, but has long since been before the public. It is not your degradation that I seek—it is the glory of man to retrace a wrong step he has taken and recover himself from every wrong way. I hope you will not be disposed to justify, or unreasonably to extenuate the part you have acted by persuasion, and under the influence of Doctor James and Mr. Pomeroy over you, to the wonder of all your friends who are new-comers into town, and warm political partisans. Whatever declarations are extorted from men which do not flow from conviction and a temper of mind corresponding with them can do them no good, nor the cause of religion. I wish you, sir, to take a full view of the case before you, and seriously consider what of duty is lying on you to perform towards me whom you have greatly injured and grievously wounded; and above all, for the wound you have given to religion in this place, which may not be soon, if ever, healed. The following statement, which I deem just, I wish you seriously to reflect on, and answer a well-informed and impartial conscience on it:

1. You have drawn up and set on foot for circulation through this town, by subscription, a paper illiberal and very much wanting in candor, and which I consider as false and libelous.

2. You have drawn up a second paper containing criminations against your pastor, which are false, seditious and very malevolent. You was not under the influence of love to me, but of hatred and enmity, when you drew that paper. For which I demand of you personal Christian satisfaction.

3. You have attended the meetings of the inimical part of my flock and been an active partisan at them, taking counsel with them against your pastor as their head and leader.

4. You have acted as the head of their committee, and chief-manager of their evil designs against me, and the whole body has been swayed by your example and counsel.

5. You have been the life and soul of this confederacy against your pastor: giving countenance to it by your pen, your name, property, example and advice, by which many honest people have been induced to unite in it.

6. You acted as their committee-man, delegated to the association of ministers, while I was absent on a journey, improving that opportunity in hopes of prevailing against me in your malevolent designs.

7. By your charge against me of introducing the Jefferson song at a prayer-meeting, you gave authority to a false and very malevolent publication, in the *Reporter* of April 25th last, and which was, no doubt, the cause of it, and some of your party were the authors of it, and various other libelous publications in that paper. Every step you have taken as a leader in this whole business, appears to me to be the fruit of deep-rooted malice, flowing from political motives and enmity to my person, usefulness and family, and design at my extermination. You drew up those false charges against me, not in the spirit of love, not from those pure motives you suggest, but from hatred and enmity and with a view to scandalize me and run me down in my character and usefulness. And lastly, in respect to myself, your greatest offense is your present buoying up your conscience with vain pretensions of friendship to me, and of being influenced by the purest motives in this whole malevolent career. The dimmest eye will readily discern the futility of such a pretext; all your works in this whole matter stand in full proof against any such suggestions.

But, what is unspeakably worse than any personal injury you have sought to do unto me, is, the dishonor you have done to God, and the irreparable wound you have given to religion in this town by setting up such a separate worship, and so perpetuating a division in this church and town. You have signed your name to withdraw from my ministry, and consequently from all communion with this church, and to set up a separate worship, and to call in and to withdraw from my ministry and consequently from the communion with this church and to set up a separate worship, and to call in another minister, for you could hear me no longer: such a minister of whatever order as the majority of the malcontents should appoint. You have raised money for that end and appointed your treasurer; and all this before you had taken one gospel-step for conciliation, which might easily in the first stage of the business have prevented your after-conduct, so disgraceful

and injurious to religion and so fatal to the peace and unity of this church and town.

In fine, I am under a great mistake if you have not gone in the way of Cain, who hated his brother, and in the gainsayings of Korah who excited and fomented a combination against Moses and Aaron. Divers members of this church have been fully persuaded that the times will fully justify them in letting all these matters rest till the irritation of the public mind, on political subjects, should subside; which is now the case, and nothing occasions any further delay in order to a final settlement of them, in the church, but my ill state of health.

I thought it needful to make the above statement for your reflection, and that you may fully know my expectations from you; and that whatever you may see fit to do may be the result of conviction and sober judgment and not of restraint. It is now the evening of life with both, and it cannot be long before we shall meet each other at the judgment seat of Christ. I am fully persuaded your plea of friendship and brotherly love to me in this your conduct and your benevolent motives to prevent evil, not foment it, will never stand the test of that impartial tribunal. Wishing you every blessing,

I am, sir, your humble servant,

THOMAS ALLEN.

The following curt note from Mr. Little closed the correspondence:

REV. SIR:

I have received your angry, unfounded and abusive letter.

Yours, etc.,

WOODBIDGE LITTLE.

P. S.—Matthew, vii, 1-5.

We must now go back a few months in our story to the first definite steps towards a division of the parish. In consequence of the sermon preached on the next Sunday after New Year's, 1807 (January fourth), a paper was drawn up on the second of the following month and signed by a large number of persons, who agreed to pay the sums subscribed by them to Ashbel Strong, Esq., for the support of such a minister as the majority might choose. In accordance with the terms of this agreement an Episcopalian clergyman was engaged and preached once or twice a month in the town-house—which stood where the present Episcopal church does—where regular services were held every Sunday, either with or without a clergyman. From the early

part of March, most of the aggrieved party—"except a few church-members"—withdrew from Mr. Allen's ministry and attended the new place of worship.

Some of the seceders went so far as to profess great devotion to Episcopacy; and, for a time, it seemed not improbable that a parish of that order would be formed. But the scruples of "the few church-members" proved invincible; and all, or nearly all, of the disaffected, in calmer moments, finding their Congregational sentiments and principles more deeply rooted than in their angry haste they had perceived, finally held fast to the faith and discipline of their fathers.

They nevertheless did not return to the congregation of Mr. Allen, but, the alienation becoming more and more complete, soon after the date of the letters last quoted, which seemed to close all hope of reconciliation, measures were commenced for the incorporation of a new parish; and in the winter of 1808-9, John Chandler Williams managing the application before the legislature, Woodbridge Little and one hundred and eight others were incorporated as the UNION CONGREGATIONAL PARISH OF PITTSFIELD.

In the act of incorporation as drafted, clauses were inserted giving to the new parish a joint interest with the old in the meeting-house and other property of the original organization; and also releasing the members who transferred their connection from the payment of taxes which had been assessed but not collected. These provisions passed the house of representatives unchallenged, but they did not escape the keen eye of Dr. Timothy Childs, an ardent democrat and zealous parishioner of Mr. Allen, who happened that year to be one of the senators from Berkshire; and he opposed them as an invasion of the vested rights of the old parish and a violation of uniform precedent. It might have been said with truth, that there was no precedent strictly applicable to the case, inasmuch as, whatever it may have been in form, the act was not a mere permission for a colony to offshoot itself from an overgrown parent organization, but rather the separation of co-equal parts, which were entitled in equity to an equal partition of the property to whose accumulation they had jointly contributed, and which, from no exclusive fault of the seceders, they could no longer enjoy peaceably in common. The legislature, that year was, however, strongly democratic and was

not likely to take this view of the case. Indeed, the objectionable clauses were not strongly urged, and they were stricken from the bill, having had no other effect than to increase the irritation of the old parish.

The new parish was thus left to its own pecuniary resources, which were indeed ample, as it contained a very large proportion of the wealthy men of the town, whose liberality was stimulated to its utmost by what they deemed the injustice and overbearing conduct of their opponents. They had also the lively sympathy of their political friends in Boston, although it is not stated that they received any considerable sum in money from any of them, except Hon. Oliver Wendell, who was a summer resident of Pittsfield and a zealous member of the new parish.¹

One difficulty still perplexed the seceders. The legislature was competent to create a new parish, and to form it of members previously connected with another; for the parish was a merely human institution. But the church—each independent, Congregational church—was subject, and subject only, to the laws established by its Divine Founder, as interpreted by itself, and to by-laws made in conformity to the same sacred guide. No human authority outside itself, could release its members from the covenant obligations into which they had entered with God and with each other; obligations the most awful which man can take upon himself.

By the Congregational theory, the independence of the church organization was, and is, absolute. But practically it is very much modified by the moral influences which the great body of the denomination exercises over each of its members; and, for the preservation of Christian comity and a decorous uniformity, as well as that each may have the benefit of the wisdom of all, the churches have submitted generally to mutual oversight and advice; which, however, were only exercised, at the request of the parties immediately interested, and through councils selected by them, or made up of clerical and lay delegates sent by churches invited by them to do so. But to what extent the parties having submitted questions to a mutual council are bound to abide by its decision is still a matter of controversy. Had the

¹There is still among the plate of the First Congregational parish a baptismal basin of silver presented to Union Parish by Judge Wendell, which was used until the introduction of a stone font.

disputes in the Pittsfield church been submitted to a mutual council, it was evidently, however, the opinion of both parties that its advice, whether authoritative or not, would have had decisive weight.¹

Such a council the dissatisfied members of Mr. Allen's church earnestly endeavored to obtain, while he as resolutely refused to join in calling it, and as moderator of church-meetings declined to put motions looking to such a measure, or reflecting upon his own official conduct. His defense of this course was that the means of redress and reconciliation prescribed by the gospel had not been exhausted. He had also, it seems, an objection to the system of councils in the abstract. "There was," says his son, "on the part of the seceding, an eager desire of calling in an ecclesiastical body; but Mr. Allen, who never was very fond of an extraneous collection of ministers and delegates in the affairs of an independent church, was entirely opposed to such a measure. He had a perfect right to prevent it, took proper steps to prevent it, and was successful. As to a dissolution of the meeting that he might not be compelled to put the motion, he did dissolve it." A reason, not mentioned, why one party desired and the other opposed the calling of the council, doubtless was that the class from which the clerical portion of it would necessarily have been taken, was almost unanimously of federal politics, and, however earnestly they might endeavor to divest themselves of prejudice, would have hardly been able to do so thoroughly.

The somewhat arbitrary exercise of authority, which Mr. Allen considered necessary for the defense of his pastoral rights was successful in maintaining them, and in defeating the project for a mutual council. There still remained, however, to the dissatisfied, a recourse provided by the custom of the New England churches, by which, although they could not reach Mr. Allen and his adherents, they could procure in regard to their own conduct, the advice of pious and judicious representatives of the neigh-

¹There are also permanent organizations connected with the Congregational order—such for instance as the Berkshire Association of Congregational ministers,—which are occasionally appealed to for advice, although they strongly disclaim any ecclesiastical authority over the churches. They can, however, undoubtedly discipline members who have voluntarily submitted themselves to their jurisdiction; and would certainly denounce as an imposture any church in their vicinity, which, calling itself by their name, was scandalously loose in doctrine or discipline.

boring churches, and the recommendation of such a course as would secure the recognition of a new church formed under it.

It was in their power to call an *ex parte* council and thus, should its fraternal approval justify them in dissolving their connections with the church to which they had formerly belonged and forming a new one, their own conscientious scruples would be relieved, and they would ward off the odium of proceeding with rash self-confidence under the incitement of personal or political feeling.

On the first of August, 1809, an ecclesiastical council was therefore convened "by letters missive from a committee of Christian professors and others;" the following pastors and delegates being present:

Lanesboro, Rev. Daniel Collins, Andrew Squire.

Hinsdale, Rev. Theodore Hinsdale [not a settled minister although ordained and held in high esteem].

West Hampton, Rev. Enoch Hale, Deacon Samuel Edwards.

Goshen, Rev. Samuel Whitman, Deacon Oliver Taylor.

New Marlboro North, Rev. Jacob Catlin, Elijah Sheldon.

Middlefield, Rev. Jonathan Nash, Col. David Mack.

Lee, Rev. Alvin Hyde, Deacon Oliver West.

Washington, Rev. Jonathan L. Pomeroy, Hon. Ezra Starkweather.

Lenox, Rev. Samuel Shepard, Deacon Nathaniel Isbell.

Dalton, Rev. Ebenezer Jennings, Jacob Chamberlain.

A large majority of the council, if not all its members, were federalists, and some of them were very vehement in their political feelings. During the war of 1812, Doctor Catlin preached a "peace" sermon on a fourth of July. Mr. Collins had at the opening of the revolution rebuked Mr. Allen for meddling with affairs of state, and been censured for it by a Pittsfield town-meeting.¹

Still Rev. William Allen declared that "no objection could be made to any of the ministers on account of their political sentiments." He impeached the fairness of the council on the ground that those who called it had carefully selected those whose opinions on the questions at issue had already been plainly indicated; so that they knew precisely what advice they were to receive: that it was a packed jury. But whatever extraneous influences may be supposed to have biased the judgment of the

¹Vol. I, page 198.

clerical portion of the council, they were certainly men who left behind them pure and honored memories, while of some of their number, it may be truly said, that "their praise is still in all the churches."

This body met on the 1st of August, at the house of Dr. Daniel James, who was the federal physician of the town, as Drs. Timothy and Henry Childs were the democratic. Rev. Mr. Collins was chosen moderator, Rev. Mr. Shepard, scribe, and Rev. Mr. Hyde, assistant scribe. The committee of Union parish produced their charter, and the council took the following action, which we give in full from its minutes :

The council having carefully, and as they trust in the fear of God, and with a sincere desire to promote the real interests of religion in the town, attended to the statements made to them; having also deliberately and impartially heard a discussion of the several questions proposed to them in relation to the circumstances of said parish, passed the following votes unanimously :

Voted, 1st. That the council find by documents laid before them that Union parish in Pittsfield is legally incorporated by the general court, and that we as ministers and churches, do recognize it as such :

It having been represented to the council that a number of members of the church in Pittsfield belong to Union parish; that several persons also who are members of neighboring churches have moved into said parish; that others who have hope of a present interest in Christ have never publicly professed religion, but are desirous of doing it; it also having been represented that certain persons have been laid under censure by the church in Pittsfield, as appears by a vote passed to that effect, February 7; it having further been made to appear that suitable exertions to obtain a mutual council have failed.—THIS COUNCIL having deliberately considered all these statements with their attendant circumstances,—

Voted, 2d, That, in their opinion, it is expedient and consistent with gospel rule that a church be organized in Union parish.

Voted, 3d, That as the general court have incorporated a number of the members of the church of which Rev. Mr. Allen is pastor, with Union parish, it is expedient in view of the existing circumstances of the church and town, that they be considered as proper candidates for membership in the new church.

Voted, 4th, That the censure passed February 7, 1809, as already noticed, on certain brethren of the church in Pittsfield, notwithstanding we admit there were some irregularities in their proceedings, *is not a sufficient bar* to their reception with others into a church, as regular brethren of the family of Christ.

Voted, 5th, That "a number of ministers" be appointed in conformity with a written request of the committee of Union parish to proceed, in due time, to organize a church in said parish.

Voted, 6th, That the Rev. Theodore Hinsdale, Rev. Daniel Collins, Rev. Alvan Hyde, Rev. Samuel Shepard and Rev. Jacob Catlin [the Berkshire members of the council] be appointed for that purpose.

The council have been deeply impressed with the magnitude of the difficulties which have arisen in this town, in view of which they have given their best advice, having a solemn regard, as they think, to the general interest of the Redeemer's kingdom. They now heartily recommend to all concerned in these matters the exercise of the Christian spirit; commending them to the care and keeping and guidance of Almighty God.

On the 22d of August, the committee, named by the council, met for the organization of the new church.—The selectmen—Joshua Danforth, Robert Green and Oliver Robbins—having refused the use of the meeting-house, service was held in the town-house, Rev. Mr. Hyde preaching the sermon. In the afternoon the committee met the candidates for admission to the church at the hall over the academy, when the following persons presented themselves: Charles Goodrich, Nathaniel Fairfield, Zebediah Stiles, Timothy Caldwell, Timothy Haskell, Joseph Fairfield, Nathaniel Tremaine, Woodbridge Little, Daniel Chapman, Jonathan Weston, Richard Barnard, Charles Goodrich, Jr., Isaac Tremaine, John Chandler Williams, Benjamin Newell, Elisha Ely. Males, 16.

Hannah Goodrich, Abigail Barnard, Hepzibah Whitney, Sally White, Mary Newell, Deliverance Blankenship, Olive Tremaine, Huldah Colt, Sarah Colt, Roxana Allis, Lovina Case, Mary Strong, Amelia Goodrich, Eleanor Newell, Martha Gold, Hart Pomeroy, Fanny Hinsdale, Mehitable Kitteridge, Abigail Root, Sarah Peck, Elizabeth Fairfield (widow), Mary Strong, Elizabeth Pepoon, Mercy Merrick, Lucy James. Females, 25; total, 41.

The council having already decided that the censure of the First church, under which most of the candidates lay, was no bar to their uniting in a new one, it only remained to carefully examine them in their views of gospel truth and experimental religion, and the reason of their hope in Christ. All the candidates passed their ordeal to the unanimous satisfaction of the committee, after which they proceeded to the town-house "to make their doings publicly known." Here, the congregation having

re-assembled, the names of the candidates were read, and they gave their public assent to the Confession of Faith. Rev. Mr. Collins administered the rite of baptism to Benjamin Newell and Roxana Allis, and the candidates having in the presence of many witnesses entered into a solemn covenant with God and each other, were "declared to be a regularly-organized church of Christ, and in fellowship with the other Congregational churches of this vicinity."

The division of the church and parish of Pittsfield was thus recognized and sanctioned by the higher ecclesiastical, as well as the legislative powers.

On the 21st of August, Rev. Thomas Allen addressed a long letter of remonstrance to the committee, denouncing the proceedings of the *ex parte* council and the institution of the new church, which was to take place on the following day. Among the objections which he made was that such bodies, before proceeding to act, usually recommended a mutual council, to which he and his church had for some time been willing to agree, although at the meeting of the Association at Stockbridge in February, he did not deem it expedient, or likely to result in a reconciliation; things not then being ripe for that measure; and in this opinion he reminds the committee that they agreed with him.

Before the meeting of the council there had indeed been an effort made in July to avert the consummation of the separation; but the correspondence upon the subject between Hon. John Chandler Williams and Hon. Ezekiel Bacon, in behalf of their respective parishes, showed no great desire to that end on the part of the seceders, on any terms except the unconditional submission of the other party. It seems that the family and friends of Mr. Allen, convinced that his strength was no longer adequate to his parochial duties and to the struggle in which he was engaged,—and indeed that death would be the penalty of persistence,—urged him to retire, and that he assented. The members of Union parish, learning something of this, appointed Messrs. Little, Daniel Chapman, Charles Goodrich, Jr., and Capt. Tremaine, a committee to meet such as the old parish might choose "to promote an event in which the happiness and interest of the town were so much involved—a happy union, etc."

To a letter from Mr. Little, informing him of this action, Mr.

Bacon replied that Messrs. Danforth, Griswold, Hubbard and Crofoot had, with himself, been appointed to receive such written communication as the committee of Union parish might see fit to make, "being at no time indisposed to a union of the two parishes, on fair and honorable terms." In rejoinder, Mr. Williams intimated that there was a misunderstanding as to the purport of his first letter, and that the resignation of Mr. Allen was a condition precedent to any negotiation. Mr. Bacon explained that his committee were well apprised that Mr. Allen's retirement would be made one of the first conditions of the proposed union; but that they had expected that the proposal of this would be "accompanied by such other propositions as the members of Union parish would be willing to comply with in case a union could be effected on that basis." Some of that parish, and even some members of its committee, he added, had individually expressed a willingness to contribute an equal share of any sum which it might be necessary to raise for procuring a settlement for Rev. Mr. Allen. The proposition thus suggested was emphatically rejected. Assailing Mr. Allen with some pretty strong phrases, Mr. Williams declared that there were not many of his associates who "were willing to deprive their own families of their property to build up the family of a man who was not an object of charity, being, they thought, the richest clergyman in the county." In closing, Mr. Williams said: "Were the estate of Mr. Allen so small and embarrassed that it would not afford him a very decent fund for the support of his very excellent lady, his amiable daughter and his other children, the case would be very different; but we all know that he holds a very valuable estate, and, compared with the families of the first settlers of the town, who were here when he came, there is not one, happy and prosperous as they are, which is in so eligible a situation as his own."

Mr. Williams expressed a wish that the correspondence should close with this letter, but Mr. Little, apprehensive that he had stated his case so strongly that an erroneous impression would be left, on the 15th of August, wrote to Mr. Bacon, explaining that it was not intended by the committee "to convey the idea of an absolute refusal on their part to contribute to a compensation to Mr. Allen, if any was necessary or proper, although, all things considered, they thought him entitled to but little, if any." He regretted the ceremony and jealousy which had marked the cor-

respondence, and had never favored a negotiation in writing. He believed that a mere nominal union could not be desirable for either party, and thought that if they could not cordially agree in their feelings and sentiments regarding the settlement of a gospel minister, it would be better for them to remain as they were.

Some explanation is perhaps necessary of the "censure" which was visited by the First church upon its seceding members, but was not considered a bar to their admission to the new organization. It is thus recorded:

"At a meeting of the Church of Christ in Pittsfield, duly notified, held February 7, 1899, voted unanimously: That the members of this church, who signed a paper of separation from this church near two years ago and have withdrawn from our communion, and those who have of late joined with said separation by signing a petition to the general court for a poll parish, and with whom the gospel-steps to reclaim them have been taken in vain, are disorderly walkers, have violated their covenant vows to walk with us in a church-state and are suspended from communion with us, until they give us gospel-satisfaction."

The notice of the meeting by which this vote was passed was given on a stormy Sunday, and it was held on a stormy Tuesday. It was attended by only seven persons,—one of whom, a minor son of Mr. Allen, did not vote,—although the deacons had agreed to notify members in different parts of the town. Those who were placed under censure charged the six voters with unchristian presumption, as well as violation of the rules of the gospel in pronouncing judgment upon them without a hearing and without notice of proceedings pending against them for an offense which, if it existed at all, had done so for nearly two years. The offense had, however, been recently revived and aggravated by the petition cited, and, small as was the number present at the church-meeting, subsequent proceedings showed that they fairly represented the democratic members—about one-half—of the church. Still this, and other acts on both sides, more nearly resembled the anathemas hurled upon each other by rival ecclesiastical authorities in older ages, than the mild and wholesome discipline of New England churches.

This view doubtless had weight in determining the council to admit the branded members to Christian fellowship, and recognize

them as proper constituents of a new church, although they also based their decision upon the frivolous and technical nature of the reasons alleged, in test-cases, for refusing letters dismissory: such as the objection that the church of Union parish, at the time of the application, was only *in posse*, not *in esse*.

At whatever door the sin of dividing the church and parish of Pittsfield may be rightfully laid—and it does not appear that it could exclusively be laid at any—it would be unjust not to admit that Messrs. Shepard and Hyde, and their colleagues in the council, exercised their delicate functions, on the whole, for the best good of all, as little biased by prejudice and passion, as it was possible for them to be, under the circumstances.

The mad dissensions and evil passions which had been aroused had already long passed the stage when benefit could be hoped from the methods of treatment prescribed in less violent cases. A stringent application of discipline and church by-laws could only irritate and inflame. Time, and the calming events which time is sure to bring, were needful before any direct measures of healing could be effective. In the meanwhile whatever prevented the contact of those who could not meet in harmony, was a blessing and a balm, which helped to hasten the day when reconciliation and re-union should be possible. Until that day should arrive, it was in the very spirit of that religious liberty which is the proudest boast of Congregationalism—due to the seceders, that they should not be excluded from the fellowship of the churches, which confessed the same faith and walked in the same discipline, because they desired to worship God in a frame of mind and heart befitting His holy temple, undisturbed by political irritation. To have denied them this would have been unpardonable ecclesiastical tyranny.

But it was not to be expected that the matter would present itself in this light to those engaged in the struggle of that day, and blinded by the dust of its turmoil. The portion of the church which remained with Mr. Allen was, on the contrary, much disturbed by the proceedings of the council of August. They may fairly be supposed to have felt as a church of more recent days would have done, had a portion of its members—disturbed by sermons in favor of political anti-slavery, political temperance, or whatever else in the opinion of the pastor, was entitled to legislation on behalf of moral right—had unceremoniously withdrawn

from its communion, formed a new ecclesiastical organization, and been cordially received into fellowship by the neighboring churches. Indeed, they felt this more keenly than it would have been felt in later times, as the democrats seem not yet to have learned that the liberalism which, under their teachings, had begun to characterize the government of the state, was also making its way in that of the church.

They therefore determined to call a counter council, which met on the 10th of October, and consisted of pastors and delegates from the churches in Sheffield, Great Barrington and Richmond, Mass., Green River and Lebanon, N. Y., and Bennington, Vt., including among its clerical members the venerable Mr. Judson, the democratic minister of Sheffield, and Rev. David Perry of Richmond, Mr. Allen's personal friend, although political opponent.

Statements were made to this council by both parties—although only the seceders had been heard by that of August. Both were found guilty of the irregularities mutually charged, and were mildly censured; although the council declared that they discovered in Mr. Allen and his church a commendable zeal to maintain the discipline of Christ's house, and intimate no objection except to the manner in which it was enforced. Their decision closes with the following exhortation:

When the walls of Zion are broken down, all her cordial friends mourn; and it is characteristic of all who love her prosperity to unite their exertions to build up her waste places; and when the people have a mind to work, the ruins will be repaired, and God will appear in His glory.

Under these impressions, we exhort Mr. Allen and the church to exercise brotherly love and to let it continue; to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, unitedly seek the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and be vigorously employed in bringing forth much good fruit, by which their Father who is in Heaven will be glorified and they prospered.

The decision of the council was not entirely what those who called it expected; but they accepted it, complied with its advice, and placed it in full upon their records, adding, however, a long apology or explanation of their course in regard to their suspension of the seceders, admitting that their process was irregular in form, but denying that it worked, or was intended to work, any

deprivation of a hearing, or resulted in any injury to the delinquents, who were supposed to know, although not from official sources, of the proceedings against them, and had in previous cases contemned the summons of the church, and proclaimed their intention of continuing to do so.

The second council had no practical effect upon the division of the Pittsfield Congregationalists. It did not assume to revise the action of its predecessor, nor to pronounce upon the status of the church established by it; but with propriety confined its action to the body which had asked its advice, including those members who, although they had seceded from it, had not taken the steps essential to a dissolution of their connection.

Its admonition to the latter was heeded in a few instances, but not in a manner to materially affect either the old parish or the new. The First church, having acknowledged the error of their mode of procedure at the February meeting, resolved that it "did not vacate the censure; and that, if it did, still said members were regularly under discipline, and complaints against them were regularly before the church; the first and second steps of discipline having been regularly taken with them, and complaints lodged in the church against them." And having passed this vote on the 16th of October, the church cited Charles Goodrich, Jr., Timothy Haskell and Jonathan Weston to appear for trial on the 24th.

Mr. Goodrich appeared, but refused to acknowledge any allegiance to the First church. The others disclaimed its jurisdiction by paying no attention to its citation. Whereupon it was "voted, that Mr Charles Goodrich, Jr., a member of this church, has violated his covenant engagements to walk with us in a church state, and, as he confesseth, has used his influence to induce others to do the same; and the gospel-steps having been taken with him to no effect, he is hereby excluded from all Christian communion with us, without repentance, after three months." Similar votes were passed concerning Messrs. Weston and Haskell. Proceedings were also instituted against other seceders, but not until important events had transpired in both parishes.

On the 22d of August, after the institution of Union church, the church and parish concurred in the choice of Rev. Thomas Punderson, of New Haven, to be their pastor, and he was installed on the 25th of October, there being in the council convened for

that purpose, besides the Berkshire members who took part in the council of August, Rev. Mr. Perry, of Richmond, and Rev. Moses Stuart, of New Haven, afterwards the distinguished theological professor of Andover. The latter preached the ordination sermon. Rev. Dr. Todd in his Historical sermon describes Mr. Punderson as "moderate in his mental movements, kind in his feelings, faithful and diligent in his duties, and, if he had not the magnetism to make warm personal friends, he certainly had no power to make enemies." He seems to have sustained himself well in the trying position in which he was placed, and to have given satisfaction to his parishioners.

Three months after Mr. Punderson's installation, an event occurred which might well have given pause to the angry passions that ruled the hour: an event no less solemn than the death of the pastor who had ministered to the town in holy things for almost forty-six years, and to the church from its foundation; of a man who had been foremost in the secular, and prominent in the ecclesiastical, affairs of the county through its most trying years; who indeed descended to the grave while yet the leader of an embittered strife, but whose genial and benign disposition, and evident sincerity of purpose, while they could not temper the violence of his oppugnation to what he believed wrong, nor, in the heat of conflict, mitigate the odium incurred by that violence, yet in death, clothed his memory with associations which endeared it to many even of those who could not review his pastoral course with entire satisfaction.

When before the dawn of day, on the morning of February 11, 1810, the solemn tolling of the bell whose silver tones had been so dear to him in life, stirred the frosty air of the Sabbath morning, announcing to all within its sound that Thomas Allen had passed away; it broke upon the ear of some, who in the fervor of youth had joined with him to form the first church of Christ in Pittsfield, of many whose youthful studies had been encouraged and aided by him, of many to whom he had ministered in the saddest, as well as in the most joyous events of their lives, of some whose pride it was that they had followed his leadership to victory in those stormy town-meetings which placed Pittsfield on the side of freedom in the revolution, had shared with him the glories of Bennington field, and suffered with him the toils, dangers and disasters of Ticonderoga and White Plains. And whether they

had adhered to, or become estranged from, him in later conflicts, there were few in whose hearts that solemn knelling, as it came to them through the darkness did not waken the most tender and thrilling memories.

Mr. Allen had been in frail health for several years. At one of the most exciting of the church-meetings—that held in April, 1808—"his infirmities," says his son, "were so great that in presiding, he desired to have the aid of his friend, Mr. Judson of Sheffield;" but the meeting refusing his request, he did not give way for the choice of a moderator *pro tem.* as he supposed his opponents desired, in order to render him powerless to prevent a council—"but encountered the whole burden and fatigue of the meeting while he could hardly, by the aid of a smelling-bottle, keep himself from sinking to the floor."

The excitement and fatigue of this occasion left him much enfeebled; still he visited Boston in May and preached a vigorous and well written "election-sermon" before the governor and legislature, which had, to his intense gratification, become democratic. During the winter of 1808-9 his health began to decline more rapidly, and in the spring, "brought down to the very brink of the grave, he resolved on a visit to Boston for the benefit of the sea-air, although, on taking leave of his family he had little hope of ever seeing them again, and his friends had little hope that he could live to return. He reached Boston in a state which did not afford much prospect that his debilitated frame and enfeebled mind would be again invigorated."¹

While in Boston he wrote the short pamphlet entitled "An Historical Sketch of the County of Berkshire and Town of Pittsfield" for which he was censured by the federal press. "It was written," says his son, "in a state of very great infirmity and without any labor or care in preparing it for the press. If the charge had been for a literary offense, perhaps the author would have plead guilty." It is nevertheless, although brief, a valuable contribution to the history of the town, in spite of some inaccuracies and a shade of partiality in his statement of political matters.

While at Boston "his mind seemed to be engrossed by but two subjects: Death, and the church of which he was pastor. He left it divided; with a number of its members, who had with-

¹ Rev. William Allen's account.

drawn from his ministry, under censure; yet these members, he understood, were to be formed into a new church and to be formed, too, by his Christian brethren. In apprehension of this event, and in his debilitated state of mind, he wrote several letters to ministers who were of the council, in which he censured them with plainness and pungency. Considering the separation as originating in unworthy motives, he declared those who encouraged it to be engaged in a wicked work."¹ Not being aware of the infirmities under which the writer was laboring, Messrs. Shepard and Jennings permitted the letters addressed to them to be published in a pamphlet-review of Mr. Allen's course, which appeared in the summer of 1809, and whose writer,² it is to be hoped was also ignorant of Mr. Allen's condition; reduced to the extremest state of debility, and with the danger which threatened his church continually preying upon his mind. It would seem that if this state of things had been known to the seceders, a little more forbearance might have been shown to the infirmities of a dying pastor, and that there could have been no serious detriment to the cause of religion had the formation of a new church been postponed yet a little while.

Mr. Allen returned to Pittsfield about mid-summer, and a short time before the meeting of the council of August; having derived no permanent benefit from his brief and agitated trip. It was at this time that, in deference to the wishes of his alarmed family, he consented to resign his pastorate, if thereby peace could be restored to the church. The negotiation for this end failing, he remained at his post. The record of a church-meeting held August 7, after his return from Boston, was made by him, and other entries up to the 12th of January, and his handwriting appears fair and firm as at any previous time. But his decline is betrayed by the wording and orthography; points in which he had rarely failed before. A meeting of January 12, 1810, cited Zebediah Stiles and Isaac Tremaine, to answer on the 19th to a charge of having "joined the separation;" and, following the transcript of the citation is an unfinished entry erased by lines drawn through it: "*Friday, January 12th. Church-meeting was held, being opened by prayer. Proceeded to act on charges—*" These are the last words in the records of the First

¹ Rev. William Allen's statement.

² Said to have been Hon. John Chandler Williams.

church, written by its first pastor. His pen failed him before he could complete the sentence.

The next entry is as follows :

Friday, February 9, 1810. The church met at the house of Rev. Mr. Allen, and, as he was very dangerously sick, instead of attending to any business, "employed the meeting in prayer for him."

Then comes the following inscription :

THE REV. THOMAS ALLEN,

The first pastor of this church who was ordained, April 18, 1764, died in the peace, hope and triumph of the Christian, at 2 o'clock on the morning of the Lord's day, Feb. 11, 1810, aged 67 years.

Thus died Thomas Allen, the Christian, the philanthropist and the patriot; his end hastened and embittered by the agitations and vexations in which his sense of duty had involved him, in spite of a natural disposition as kindly and benignant as it was earnest and truthful.

His funeral-sermon was preached by his faithful personal and political friend, Rev. Mr. Judson, from the text: "And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." Genesis 47 : 9. It is said to have been a very pathetic and affecting discourse, well adapted to the occasion. The other clergymen who took part in the exercises were Rev. Mr. Marsh, of Bennington, and a Mr. Hall, who was preaching as a candidate for the pulpit left vacant by Mr. Allen.¹

Many of the neighboring ministers were, however, present.

Nine years after the death of Mr. Allen, an article was inserted in the warrant for the annual town-meeting, "To see if the town will erect a marble monument with an appropriate inscription at the tomb, and to the memory, of their late beloved and lamented pastor, the Rev. Thomas Allen;" and the consideration of the subject was referred to Samuel Root, Jonathan Allen, 2d, Henry

¹It would appear by the presence of a candidate of this kind on this occasion, that had Mr. Allen lived he was intending to resign his pastorate as soon as a suitable successor should be found.

H. Childs, Oren Goodrich and Simeon Brown, who made the following report at the May meeting :

With respect to the propriety of public acts designed in commemoration of public benefactors, your committee are perfectly satisfied in consequence of the beneficial effects they are calculated to produce upon society.

In the character of our late beloved pastor, the Rev. Thomas Allen, we discover that strong attachment to the principles of our free government, that love of country, that benevolence, that charity, that zeal for the temporal and eternal welfare of his fellowmen which are the true characteristics of the patriot, the philanthropist and the Christian ; and which eminently entitle him to some commemorative act of the citizens of this town.

And whereas, a free voluntary contribution will best comport with the object proposed, we would recommend the town the appointment of a committee whose duty it shall be to open a subscription-book for the purpose of raising a sufficient sum to defray the expense, which your committee have estimated at \$175; and whenever such sum shall be subscribed, it shall be the duty of said committee to prepare and place, at the tomb of the late Rev. Thomas Allen, such monument together with suitable inscriptions.

This report was adopted and a committee consisting of John B. Root, Henry H. Childs and Phinehas Allen was appointed to carry it into effect ; but, for some unexplained reason, the monument was never erected. On the erection of a new church in 1853, a handsome mural tablet of white marble was placed over the pulpit, and bears the following inscription :

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS ALLEN,

First Minister of Pittsfield, born at Northampton, January 7, 1743. Ordained First Minister of the Congregational Society of Pittsfield, April, 1764. Preached in this place forty-six years, and died February 11, 1810. *Fortiter gerit crucem.*

Mr. Allen's remains were first deposited in his tomb in the first burial-ground near the church. Afterwards they were removed to the grave-yard on First street, from which they were transferred to Pontoosuc Hill in the Pittsfield cemetery, upon which his grandson and namesake has erected a monumental obelisk.

CHAPTER VII.

THE METHODIST AND BAPTIST CHURCHES—CONGREGATIONAL ZEAL FOR THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF THE YOUNG.

[1800-1812.]

Inequality of the Massachusetts laws—Re-organization of the Baptist church—Rev. John Francis—Charter of the Methodist parish of Pittsfield and other towns—Secession of reformed Methodists—Dissenters from all churches—Philosophical religionists—Obstacles to the new churches—Rev. Mr. Hibbard—Congregational plan for the instruction of youth in religion.

WHILE the Congregational church and parish were rent by the political dissensions described in the last chapter, the Baptist and Methodist churches, composed mostly of substantial, well-to-do farmers, but comparatively few in numbers and inferior in wealth, grew and flourished; obtaining a foothold in the town which they have never lost. Both were deeply inspired with the zeal peculiar to early religious reformers, each believing undoubtingly that it held tenets essential to the full faith of the gospel, but which had long been lost sight of by the rest of the Christian world. Both, also, felt keenly the injustice done themselves and other dissenting denominations, by the laws of Massachusetts, and the members of both clung with the more ardent love to the church of their faith for the unequal burdens which they were compelled to bear for its sake, and the impediments thrown by the laws in the way of their mode of worship. We have already somewhat fully discussed the nature of these laws,¹ but we quote a portion of a paragraph from a local work showing a Baptist view of some of the chief grievances complained of.²

¹ Vol. 1, chapter 25.

² History of the Baptist church in Pittsfield, Mass., from its organization in 1772 to October, 1853. Prepared by its present pastor, Rev. Lemuel Porter, Pittsfield, 1853.

After speaking of the original laws of the province and the ameliorations and exemptions, granted from time to time, by the General Court, Dr. Porter says:

All these exemptions were loaded with unjust and humiliating conditions. Look at some of them: The person wishing to attend and aid a Baptist church, of which he was a member, must pay taxes to the Congregationalists, unless he lived within five miles of his place of meeting. This, of course, to many, was impossible. Then every Baptist church must, yearly, give into the county-clerk a list of all who professed to be *Ana-Baptists*, and attended their meeting. Then this certificate would be good for nothing unless three other churches should each give a certificate that they esteemed this church to be of their denomination and conscientiously believed them to be *Ana-Baptists*. Here insult was added to injury. You might as well demand that Congregationalists should call themselves *Ana-Baptists*. Then Baptists, etc., must pay their money into the treasury at any rate. On showing that their names were on the certificate, they might draw it out again—if they could. Then no one could draw out his money unless he belonged to a society incorporated by law. Baptists would not get incorporated for various reasons; among which was the very good one, that every incorporated society must always have a minister. If in any six months they were without a minister three months, they should pay, for the first offense, not more than \$60 nor less than \$30. For every succeeding offense, not over \$100 nor less than \$60.

With the exception of the misnomer of *Ana-Baptist*, applied by law to the Baptists, all denominations of Christians, who dissented from the Congregational faith were subject to the indignities and burdens named. Under these and other depressing influences, the Episcopalians, after the removal of their leader, Mr. Van Schaack, to Kinderhook, disappeared. But to the vigorous young life of the Methodists and Baptists, they added new fire.

It will be remembered that the first Baptist church organized in Pittsfield, after an existence of twenty-six years, was by request of its pastor, Elder Valentine Rathbun, and his sole remaining deacon, dropped from the roll of the Shaftsbury Association, and probably entirely dissolved, in 1798. But a brief interval elapsed, however, before, on the 27th of October, 1800, it found a successor, fifteen persons entering into a covenant to form and maintain a Baptist church. Their names, which are held in much veneration by their successors, are Josiah Francis,

John Francis, Josiah Francis, Jr., Oliver Robbins, James Hammond, Daniel H. Francis, Mr. Beckwith, Backus Boardman (colored), Anna Francis (wife of John), Abigail Powers, Anna Chapman, Mahala Chapman, Mrs. Beckwith, Ruth Marvin and Polly Francis.

On the 22d of March, 1801, the body thus constituted was, after due examination of its members, recognized as a church in full fellowship with the Baptist denomination, by an ecclesiastical council, consisting of Elders Ebenezer Smith of Partridgeville—now Peru and Hinsdale—and James Barnes of Canaan, N. Y., with Brothers Jacob Moon and Allen Matterson of Stephentown, N. Y. Their first communion was administered Sunday, August 3, 1801, by Elder Barnes, and their first baptism was on the 15th of August, in the same year, when Elder Smith went down into the waters of the pond at Parker's saw-mill on Churchill brook, with Reuben Brooks and his wife. This pond, situated in one of the most romantically-beautiful regions of the town, was for many years the baptismal font of the church in Pittsfield, and cannot even now be visited without reverential memories of the solemn scenes which it witnessed in the days when the name of North Woods was not a misnomer of the locality in which it lies. Near it stood the homes of Josiah Francis and his sons John and Josiah, Jr., of the Parkers, the Powers and other intelligent, thoughtful and prosperous families, in whose spacious, gambrel-roofed houses—most of which still stand, moss-covered and embrowned by time—the young church planted her most thrifty vines and gathered her richest fruitage. In one of them, that of John Francis, the church was organized, and the council of recognition was held. In it, on the 19th of September, 1801, occurred the first death in the little flock—that of Anna Francis, the wife of its owner.

For the first five years and four months of its existence, the church settled no pastor, but met regularly for united worship, at the houses of its members, the exercises being conducted by such of their own number as had gifts in that direction, except when they received an occasional visitation from the neighboring clergy; of whom, be it remembered, John Leland was one—and one with a large missionary spirit. It is proof that the ministrations of these early pastorless years were not without power, that in them twenty-six members were admitted to the church by

baptism, and three by letter, which—one being dismissed and two dying—left their number forty-two.

It seems certain, however, that, although nominally without a minister, the church, during, at least, the latter part of this time, had what may be called a pastoral leader; for when they came to choose a pastor, he was taken from their own number, having doubtless already shown a special capacity for the office.

The member thus honored was John Francis, at whose house the church had been organized, and who, in accordance with the recommendation of a council of advice held a few days previous, was, on the 26th of June, 1806, ordained by a council called for that purpose. The services were held in the Congregational meeting-house, the use of which was granted by the selectmen, it being then town-property.¹ Elder Lemuel Covell offered the introductory prayer and preached the sermon; Elder Leland gave the right hand of fellowship; Elder Justus Hull delivered the charge; Elder Joseph W. Sawyer offered the ordaining, and Elder Ebenezer Smith the concluding, prayers.

Mr. Francis was born at Wethersfield, Connecticut, in the year 1759. At what time he removed to Pittsfield is not certain, but it was probably early in 1780; for in that year he attained his majority, and we find his name enrolled in Capt. Rufus Allen's company of matross, which, in some alarm, "marched forty miles, and served from October 13 to October 17." We next find him mentioned in the town-records in 1789, as one of those whom an investigating committee reported to be unquestionably Baptists, and attendants upon Mr. Rathbun's preaching. In the same list appears the name of his father, Josiah Francis, who, according to the family tradition, came to Pittsfield two or three years after his son. These two were the only members of the new church, which the records indicate to have been members of the old. Josiah, Jr., who was probably also connected with it, is not

¹Several years afterwards, when the federal members of the First church, for political reasons, separated from it, and formed the Union church, they petitioned for the use of this meeting-house, for the installation of Rev. Mr. Punderson as their pastor, stating that a similar courtesy had been granted the Baptists. The selectmen, who were all democrats, refused the petition, on the ground that the Baptist church was organized from an honest dissent from the Congregational faith, while the Union church originated in hostility to that from which it separated.

mentioned in the list, for some unexplained reason ; perhaps being absent that year.¹ But, at whatever time the family or its different members came in, they brought their Baptist principles with them, firmly and religiously fixed in heart and mind. "Here was Baptist stock, root and branch, fiber and tissue, seed and fruit,"² and here it has been transmitted ever since.

Elder Francis remained pastor of the church, preaching in the old North Woods school-house, for seven years and three months, and died in office, September 28, 1813. During his ministry, harmony prevailed, twenty-one members were added by baptism, and one by letter ; three were excluded, and one died, leaving a membership of sixty-nine. In 1807, the Shaftsbury Association welcomed the Pittsfield church back to its fold, and, in the announcement of its pastor's death to the meeting of 1814, placed upon its record the following honorable memorial : "We announce the death of the truly pious pastor of the Baptist church in Pittsfield, Elder John Francis. His highest encomiums are an ardent thirst for the welfare of souls, a pious grief for all sin, and an unblemished character."³ The *Sun* in announcing his death, said :

For a number of years he has been the worthy and highly esteemed pastor of the Baptist Church in Pittsfield, and was a zealous and faithful preacher of the gospel of salvation, uniting in his Christian character, the strength of divine grace with the beauty of spiritual proportions.

Called suddenly to lay down his armor, he calmly bade adieu to the scenes of earth, trusting to that salvation he had preached to others. When asked, a few moments before he expired, what message he would leave behind, he replied, "Remember the words which I have spoken to you while I was yet with you."

Of the introduction of the Methodist church into Pittsfield, we have already given some account,⁴ but something more of

¹In the records, John Francis is mentioned as three years on the school committee and holding other town-offices. Josiah, Jr., was also several years on this committee ; was selectman in 1817, and held other offices in town.

²Centennial sermon at the dedication of the remodeled church, April 6, 1873, by the pastor, Rev. C. H. Spalding.

³Rev. Mr. Spalding's sermon.

⁴Vol. I., pages 455-6.

detail is due to the results which have followed the labors of the early apostles of that faith in this vicinity.¹

In forming the Pittsfield circuit, which then included a large extent of territory, Rev. Lemuel Smith preached the first Methodist sermon in the town, at the house of Zebulon Herrick in the East Part. This was probably in the year 1789,² and the appointment was continued at that house until the ensuing fall, when it was transferred to Nathan Webb's, about two miles distant, in Dalton. Here it was continued for several years, after which it was again changed to the school-house, near William Z. Herrick's, in Pittsfield, near the Dalton border. Soon after the first sermon, a class was formed with the following members: Thomas Hubbard, Enoch Hubbard, Zadock Hubbard, Joshua Luce, Ira Gaylord, Henry Durkee, Edward Roberts, senior, Oliver Allen, Nathan Webb, senior, Nathaniel Kellogg, senior, Joshua Arnold, Solomon Clark.

Shortly after his first sermon at Mr. Herrick's house, Rev. Mr. Smith preached at the residence of Col. Oliver Root in the West Part, and made some converts. In the winter following, Rev. Robert Green, being detained by a storm at the house of Captain Joel Stevens, on West street, close under the Taconic mountains, made so good use of the tempestuous hours, in preaching, that a number of converts³ were made and a class organized with the following members: Josiah Wright, Mr. [probably Joel] Stevens, Joshua Whitney, John Francis, David Ashley, Selah Andrews.

The meetings were held for a while at Capt. Stevens's house, then at the school-house, and finally at the meeting-house, which was erected on West street about the year 1800, and continued to be the principal place of worship for the Methodist society until 1827.⁴

"In 1801, Pittsfield was made the head of a district, embracing all the territory which lies from Connecticut on the south, to the Canada line on the north, and from the Green to the Adirondack mountains east and west; or including what are now known

¹Rev. Dr. Carhart, pastor of the church in 1864, prepared a brief sketch of its history from which we gather many of the facts here stated.

²Dr. Carhart thinks 1790-91.

³Bishop Asbury mentions in 1792, "a melting time among the people of Pittsfield, where the Lord was at work."

⁴Dr. Carhart's History.

as the Cambridge, Burlington, Plattsburg, St. Albans, and part of the Troy districts of the Vermont and Troy conferences, besides portions of territory now within the bounds of the New York and New England conferences."¹

In the year 1804, the following persons, with such as might be associated with them, were incorporated as the Methodist Religious Society of Pittsfield, Hancoek, Dalton and Washington :

Gideon Allen, Loyal W. Allen, David Ashley, Allen Barnes, Solomon Clark, John Clark, Seth Coe, John Dighton, Oliver Fuller, Ira Gaylord, Robert Green, Leonard Goff, Enoch Hubbard, Zadock Hubbard, Thomas Hubbard, Malcolm Henry, Nathaniel Kellogg, Jr., Joshua Luce, Richard Osborn, William Pomeroy, William Roberts, Jr., Aaron Roberts, Aaron Root, Amasa Smith, Samuel Stanton, Eliphalet Stevens, Jonathan Stowe, Lebbeus Webb, Nathan Webb, Jr., John Ward, Joshua Whitney, Joseph Ward, Josiah Wright.

Many of the corporators named, we recognize as residents of Pittsfield, and a majority of them were undoubtedly so; but we are unable to point them out. The descendants of some of them still hold a place in the church.

Eli Root, Esq., was designated as the magistrate to issue the warrant for the first meeting of the corporators, but he dying before he had performed that duty,² the organization was delayed until the next year, when a supplementary act was passed, authorizing the warrant to be issued by Joshua Danforth, Esq., or any other justice in the county.

In 1807, an important addition to the act of incorporation was passed, providing that

Any person belonging to either of the towns of Pittsfield, Dalton, Washington or Hancoek, who may hereafter desire to join said Methodist society of Pittsfield, and shall declare such as his or her intention in writing and deliver the same to the clerk of the town, and a copy of the same to the minister of the parish in which he or she may reside, on or before the first day of March in the year when such application shall be made, and at the same time produce a certificate of their being united with, or having become a member of, said society, signed by the minister or clerk, and two of the committee of the said

¹Origin and Progress of Methodism in North Adams, by Rev. T. A. Griffin.

²Died, October 28, 1804, Eli Root, Esq., aged 74, for 50 years a resident of this town. *Mortuary Record, First Church.*

Methodist society, such persons shall from and after the date of such declaration, with his or her polls and estate, be considered a member of said society. Provided, however, that such persons shall be holden to pay his or her proportion of all moneys [already] legally assessed in said parish to which such person formerly belonged.

Another section of the act required a similar course to be taken by those desirous of relinquishing their connection with the Methodist society.

This addition to its charter went far towards placing the Methodist society upon an equality with the "standing-order," and relieving its members from the vexatious yearly renewal of certificates; giving it a decided advantage over the Baptists, who were unincorporated.¹

In 1806, a general and interesting revival of religion began under Methodist auspices, and extended throughout the town.

In 1810, the annual New York Methodist conference held its session with the church in Pittsfield.

In 1812, a schism occurred which somewhat retarded the progress of the society; about thirty of its members, at the West Part—a portion of the town, whose inhabitants were always much given to independent thought and action—seceding, and styling themselves "Reformed Methodists." In what their tenets differed from the church from which they separated, does not appear; but the "folly and wickedness," of which they are accused, seem to have consisted of disregard of the constituted ecclesiastical authorities of their sect. Rev. Mr. Hibbard, who was stationed on this circuit in 1813, says that public opinion was in their favor, fearing that they had been unjustly treated, and were a persecuted people. Upon Mr. Hibbard's arrival in Pittsfield, they sent a committee to him, requesting to be formed into a class according to the Methodist discipline; to which he consented on condition that they should conform to that discipline

¹In 1795, Valentine Rathbun, Daniel Rathbun, John Remington, Jonathan Kingsley, and John Bryant, were incorporated as the Baptist Religious Society of Pittsfield with the rights and immunities usually enjoyed by dissenting parishes; but the society died with Mr. Rathbun's church; and for the reasons specified by Dr. Porter, no parish was incorporated in connection with that formed in 1800. Nor to this day is there any parochial organization distinct from the church, which was in 1849 incorporated with parochial powers, having previous to that year, held its property through trustees.

and receive him as their minister. This they did, and appear to have conducted themselves blamelessly through the usual probation of six months. But when, at the expiration of that term, they expected to be fully re-instated, Mr. Hibbard told them that although their motives in withdrawing from the church were, as he believed, pure, yet he considered the act wrong, and that their error had arisen from a mistaken notion of conducting class-matters. He therefore required of them a confession of their error in this respect. To this four or five assented; the others withdrew in displeasure. Mr. Hibbard gives the following account of the end of the schism:

I found they would neither receive me nor the discipline to govern them, unless we would govern according to their opinions. But my sufferings and labors with them were so well understood, that it changed public opinion, and their congregation left them; this vexed them, and they accused me heavily. They said, "You meant to break us up." I said, "Yes, that is true, and I am only sorry that I did not succeed in making you good Methodists."

These schismatics formed a coalition with others, on different circuits, and made zealous struggles to establish themselves as a church, under the name of "Reformed Methodists." But Wisdom was not "justified of her children" among them; therefore they have not prospered. Confusion was in their counsels, and in many places they dwindled away. Professing themselves to be spiritually wise, when they were not, they became bold in their boisterous preaching, and, having the name of Methodists, they were in good repute for a while. But some have since joined the Shakers, and some the Christians, so that their number is now (1826) small.¹

These schismatics, who have long ago passed away, and left no defenders, should not be judged too harshly. The solitude of farm-life in our retired highland valley, palisaded by great hills, favored much erratic religious and theological thought. In the lonesomeness of his forest-hemmed fields, nature, life, few but deeply-conned books, and the Sabbath sermon pondered through the week, propounded to the farmer awful questions, for which no wide reading had furnished him either an answer, or an excuse for setting them aside as beyond answer. A resolute and inquiring mind, with a deep sense of personal responsibility for error, forbade him to avoid or to meet these questions lightly. Had he attempted

¹ Hibbard's Memoirs, page 321.

to shun them, they would only the more persistently have haunted him. He met them, therefore, manfully, and the result was, doubtless, in a great majority of instances, a deep and abiding conviction of religious truth. But often, instead, there came of his meditations, fanaticism on the one hand, deism on the other; or, perhaps more frequently than either, a personal creed more or less approximating to those of the neighboring sects, but doing away, either by explanation, modification or absolute denial, with some of the points which interposed stumbling-blocks in the path of his faith. Every town had marked men of this class, who, by earnest and prolonged thought, however little guided by learning, had wrought out for themselves a philosophy of religion, in various degrees divergent from the orthodox beliefs of the day; some making but a slight reservation, at which the conservators of the church might wink, in their assent to the Articles of Faith; others maintaining heresies so rank that they were deemed infidels.

Fanaticism rarely manifested itself—unless some extreme opinions among the Methodists could be so considered—in regard to either public or private morals; but generally in pushing disproportionately and to undue limits, points in ordinarily-accepted doctrinal theology, or by the perversion of obscure but startling passages of Scripture, which had been morbidly pondered. Thus, much brooding over St. Paul's admission of the possibility of an unpardonable sin, haunted more than one unhappy religionist to madness: a fact which has furnished a theme to the greatest American author who has presented truth under the guise of fiction.

A favorite subject for these lonely thinkers among the hills was found in the mystical prophecies of Daniel and St. John regarding the latter days of this earth; and some of them deemed that they had solved the inspired mysteries.¹

¹ William Miller, known as the Second Advent Prophet, but only professing to be a divinely-commissioned interpreter of prophecy, may be considered as one and the most noted of this class—and the only one who, so far as we know, fixed upon and believed himself to be commanded by God to proclaim a certain year as that in which the Fifth Monarchy would commence. For, although he removed from Pittsfield almost in infancy, his father's family had long been residents of the town, and, in his new home, he was surrounded, among similar scenes, with the same influences which prevailed in the old.

William Miller was born February 15, 1782, at a farm-house which stood on

Occasionally a few persons in Pittsfield, and perhaps some of the neighboring towns, uniting upon an erratic creed, formed a little schismatic sect, of which, if the representations which have come down to us are correct, the Reformed Methodist was one. But, generally even sooner than in their case, the majority returned to the communion which they had left, while the remainder, for the most part, gravitated to the Shakers; whose boast, indeed, it was that, in the bosom of their peaceful church, all troubled spirits found rest; a boast which, after the first few years of their establishment in Berkshire and Columbia counties, had at least the semblance of truth.

If deism, less frequently than other forms of error, resulted from morbid religious studies and meditations, it had, from other causes, become in the mass of community more prevalent than any other. Rev. Mr. Hibbard, writing of his experience on the Pittsfield and Litchfield circuits in 1797-99, says: "I was kindly received by many; but deism was prevailing. Mr. Thomas

the south side of West street, about one mile from the park. In 1786, his parents migrated to Low Hampton, Washington county, New York, where he remained until he was twenty-two years old, when he removed to Poultney, Vt. He was a captain in the war of 1812, and was engaged in the battle of Plattsburg, conducting himself with credit. From his youth he was a devoted student of the Bible, and early became convinced that the second coming of the Redeemer would take place in the year 1843. In 1833, he believed that he received a command from Heaven to go out and proclaim the approaching end of time, that all men might be prepared to meet their Judge. After the mental struggle and pleading with the Lord usual in such cases, he yielded to the impulse—divine or otherwise—and, for ten years, with voice and pen, taught men that the second advent of the Saviour would be witnessed in the year named. And so evident was his sincerity, and so plausible were his arguments—aided by the excitement that such an announcement would create in a certain class of minds—that a great multitude, said to number fifty thousand souls, embraced his doctrine, and, after their fashion, prepared to ascend with their Redeemer and King. And, although the passing of the year 1843 disproved his predictions, and the great mass of his followers left him, yet in the following year he published an "Apology," acknowledging, of necessity, an error in his computation, but maintaining that it could be only slight, and that all the signs continued to proclaim the end nigh at hand. In this faith, having returned to the home of his youth at Low Hampton, he died in 1849. A remnant of his disciples still believe in his modified prediction, but year by year, diminish in numbers. All who knew him, agree in pronouncing him a sincere and truthful man, of the utmost purity of character, and earnest in his love for his fellow-men.

Paine's 'Age of Reason' was highly thought of by many who knew neither what the age they lived in, or reason, was." But not only were Paine's theological works "highly thought of" by many persons of superficial thought and attainments—to many of whom they had been introduced by sympathy with his political utterances—but the more learned and subtle reasoning, and the keener and more polished wit, of Voltaire found a favorite place in the libraries of cultivated and able men. The influences which, extending from Paris, Berlin and Ferney, infected the whole civilized world, did not leave remote Berkshire untouched. Many openly denied the truth of the Christian religion; many more secretly doubted, or disbelieved. Even hatred of France could not protect all the federalists from the power of the great French philosopher; and men who would have scorned to yield to the vulgar missiles of Thomas Paine, were almost proud to fall before the knightly lance of Arouet Voltaire. It was the fashion of the day.

Against this fashionable deism, and every other form of infidelity, the Methodist church set itself to war; and not only against these. It was emphatically a church militant. It boldly attacked the theological tenets to which other religious denominations clung most tenaciously. It denounced as sinful many of the pleasures in which, not only the world at large, but most "professed Christians," delighted to indulge. And, in return, it found itself and its doctrines bitterly assailed on every side. As men at that period were intensely partisan in their politics, so they were intensely sectarian in religion. Each sect held most obstinately, and made most pronounced, those tenets which were most peculiar to itself. That is, it concentrated its attention, as it did its defenses, at the points most likely to be assailed. The Baptists being of the Calvinistic branch of their denomination, and adhering to the Congregational church-polity, differed little from the "standing-order," except in requiring baptism by immersion as essential to true membership in the Church of Christ, and in denying that ordinance altogether, to infants. But in these points there was matter enough for sharp theological controversy. Their oppugnation to the prevailing creed was, however, of little moment compared with the attacks made upon it by the Methodists, who acknowledged a hierarchy of bishops, presiding elders, priests and deacons; who boldly denied the doctrine

of election and reprobation; averred the possibility of a "fall from grace;" and in other particulars impugned the traditional theology of New England as unscriptural. Little advance had then anywhere been made towards genuine toleration of opinion upon points like these; and with a very large class errors of belief concerning them were considered as fatal to the holder's hopes of Heaven; while many of those who did not deny that those who taught them sincerely, might be saved, yet deemed their offense a very serious one, and dangerous to the souls of others. The result was, on both sides, an immense amount of polemical, doctrinal, preaching and writing, for the public; of angry controversy and uncharitable judgment in private life. And in this storm the Methodists were, as far as numbers and social position was concerned, the weaker party.

But, not content with assailing the favorite theological tenets of the Calvinistic churches, the Methodists entered upon a crusade against the most cherished pleasures of the world. However pertinaciously the Congregational church clung to the doctrinal teachings of the Puritans, its discipline as to social pleasures had, whether for good or evil, become greatly relaxed. Saving a little ascetic observation of the Sabbath, and a few like points, it was, in Berkshire, hardly less tolerant of the genial pleasures of life, than was the English Church. This, the Methodists attributed to the prominence generally given to the notion that good works—if not absolutely, as held by some, a hindrance—were not essential to salvation. It was perhaps in quite as great a measure, due to the liberalizing influence of increasing wealth and culture, and to the position of the Congregational, as a quasi state church. But, whatever may have been the cause, the old Puritanic view of the wassail and the dance, as exceedingly sinful, had almost entirely disappeared. Never was there a people more given to, or more unrebuked in, those pleasures, than those of Pittsfield and Berkshire in the earlier part of the nineteenth century; with few exceptions, and those chiefly from Methodist influence. The numerous taverns were haunted by revelers of all grades; and the social glass, with its associated merriment, was found every-where from the bar-room to the clergyman's sideboard. Festal suppers were frequent: clubs, like the Woronoko, held them at regular intervals at the houses of their members; all public festivals were celebrated by them, or by dinners; they

followed the squirrel-hunt, the military election or whatever else afforded an excuse for the jovial spirit of the day. But dancing was the passion of the young, and, while certain tavern-revelries of the coarser sort, were frowned upon by staid elders, the "civil dance" was approved, or at least not greatly discountenanced. Clergymen sometimes defended it as innocent, or at least but a venial transgression, although some lingering trace of older opinions was found in the idea that dancing was not to be indulged in while they were present. But, with this exception, the practice was as universal and as passionately followed as among any European peasantry. In all respects, the people of Berkshire were a genial, pleasure-loving race; often, indeed, it must be confessed, pursuing it too grossly and to too great extremes.

Against all this—including gaming, light conversation, jesting, and of course profanity—the Methodists waged uncompromising warfare; some of the more zealous, indeed, occasionally pushing their opposition to what, in a less primitive state of society would have been deemed impertinent. It may be imagined that while in this conflict they won some friends and converts, and in time largely influenced public opinion and manners, they roused against themselves a hostility which manifested itself in divers ways, and in various degrees. But this, as well as the opposition which they encountered from other denominations, they counted only the persecution which crowned their faith. Nothing of the kind, however, seems to have manifested itself until some years after the first introduction of the Wesleyan Church into Pittsfield; and it could never have been very general. The Methodist preachers first held forth in the houses of Congregational church-members, who hospitably entertained them, and took great pains to gather the people to hear their exhortations; and this was often the case through all the earlier years of the nineteenth century. Nay, even deistical tavern-keepers invited them to exhort in their dancing-halls. And, in return, the preachers, at least in the earliest years, generally left their converts, uninfluenced, to unite with the churches to which they were attracted by circumstances; often the Baptist or Congregational. The courtesies of the deists, of course, could not be returned in that way.

When, however, opposition to the new faith was awakened by its progress, neither sharp denunciations for heresy, nor the

unpopularity of its ascetism in morals, proved so great an obstacle to its success—and to that of the Baptists as well—as the opinion in community that these denominations were “not respectable,” inasmuch as their preachers, with few exceptions, had not received a collegiate education. They replied, to be sure, that “as these were, so were the Apostles.” But they gained little by this retort except a new charge of irreverent presumption. Nor, with the mass of community, did it avail to do away with this prejudice, that many of the Baptist and Methodist clergy showed themselves, not only eloquent and persuasive exhorters, but able to cope with the best in logical argument and theological learning. Massachusetts laws had from the first required a learned, as well as a pious, clergy, and learning was judged only by the standard of Harvard and Yale. Without that learning duly certified by diploma, the clergymen upon whom the new sects—to which not many learned had yet been called—were obliged to depend, could not reflect “respectability” upon their flocks. It did not matter, that in Massachusetts, at that time, infants almost imbibed theological lore with their mother’s milk; that, at the least, few grew to man’s estate without listening to innumerable theological lectures, so that many laymen were almost as well versed in matters of belief as the majority of clergymen. Nor did it matter that the chief deficiency of the unlearned clergy—inability to consult the Scriptures in their original tongues—was practically shared by many of those nominally learned, but who had little critical nicety of scholarship. He who lacked collegiate training, or at least a collegiate diploma, however little it detracted from his ability as a religious teacher, could bestow no respectability upon his people, whatever else he might bestow. Nor was it altogether respectable to belong to any other denomination than that which was favored by the state, and to which most of those distinguished for wealth or place belonged. And as those who could boast but little education themselves, were often most careful to shine in the light of an educated ministry; so those who were most doubtfully struggling through the debatable ground of society, always clung in the church, as elsewhere, most pertinaciously to association with those whose position was assured. The dread of not being classed with “the respectable” was therefore a powerful obstacle to the spread of new sects; and, not only were those

possessed of an uneasy anxiety regarding their place in society, influenced by this prejudice ; but ardent and impressible youth, who might be touched by the fervid eloquence or convinced by the masculine logic of the new teachers, were sensitive to the ridicule which was sure to fall upon those who avowed themselves converts. This point of respectability was the weapon which Rev. Mr. Hibbard's father used, and for years effectually, to prevent his avowal of the Methodist faith. "I wanted to be a Congregationalist and to be respectable," said he in his graphic description of his mental struggles, "but I wanted the love and seriousness of the Methodists."

But, however the Baptist and Methodist preachers may have counted secular learning as of secondary importance in their calling, the greater and best part of them were far from holding it in contempt. If it could have been had without detriment to what they regarded essential gospel-truth, they would, as ardently as any, have desired an educated ministry. Some of those whose native abilities best enabled them to dispense with its aids, most deeply regretted their deficiencies in this respect, and among them was Rev. Mr. Hibbard, the only one of the early Methodist pastors of whom we are able to give a sketch.

Mr. Hibbard was born at Norwich, Connecticut, February 24, 1771, his father being Nathan Hibbard, a tanner and shoemaker. His mother's maiden-name was Mehitable Crosby. He was unfortunately christened, not William, but Billy, a circumstance which, coupled with a certain quaint wit which he manifested in common with most men of mark in his day, has led to an underestimate of his ability and character. As we have had occasion to observe in other instances, tradition, an inveterate preserver of distorted and misplaced facts, is sure to keep in memory every anecdote of piquant wit and quaint humor which it can lay hold of in the life of a noted individual ; leaving them in grotesque prominence when the solid ground-work of his ordinary life and conversation is forgotten. It is far easier to remember a happy retort or a pointed allusion than to retain the logic, or even the conclusions, of a labored discourse. But, fortunately, Mr. Hibbard has left an autobiography distinguished by an evident truthfulness, and told with a simplicity and earnestness, which make it charming reading—at least for those who do not peruse it with a controversial spirit.

From his earliest years, almost from infancy, he was distinguished by the most unqualified faith in the Holy Scriptures, implicit reliance upon the efficacy of prayer, and a painfully-sensitive conscience. But, unqualified as was his faith, it was not unquestioning; and, even before he had heard or known of doubts concerning any of the articles of the Congregational faith, in which he had been educated, he had reasoned out for himself a creed very similar to the Methodist. In his autobiography the conflict in his mind between old and new ideas is described with much power, and is often deeply interesting; for whatever the reader may think of their grounds, to him his fears of eternal misery were a vivid reality, and his remorse for sin was apparently as bitter as it was in the nature of man to endure. Some of the incidents of this early experience were also amusing to himself in his later days. And all is told with simplicity. From his childhood, too, he was visited by remarkable dreams, and evidently put considerable faith in them, as in other similar modes of communication from the Deity. When he was four years old the revolutionary war began, and his father and four uncles went to take part in it, as soldiers. For years they were absent in the field, and nightly he united his infant-voice in prayer for their safety, with that of his tearful step-mother. He was encouraged in these prayers by a dream. While he was yet a child, his father removed to Hinsdale—about nine miles east of Pittsfield, where his religious experiences were continued and occupied a great part of his attention, although he endeavored to conceal them. His visions continued and were not confined to his sleeping-hours. The doctrine of predestination oppressed him with fearful power. On one occasion, as he was riding, it so affected him that he nearly fell from his horse. “As soon as I had gained strength,” said he, “I cried most earnestly to the Lord in these words: ‘O Lord, does everybody believe so?’ That moment an answer was suggested to my mind, as plain as it could have been spoken to my outward ears: ‘No! There is a people in England that teach clearly from the Scriptures, that any poor sinner, who has not committed the unpardonable sin, may be saved if he will repent and turn to the Lord in the time of his probation and day of grace; which God gives to every man. But, if he will not obey the calls of God’s Spirit, but resists and grieves him by the sin he willingly commits, then he ought to be damned.’”

“This was good news to my mind. I knew it was power from the Lord. * * * I then cried unto the Lord to spare my life until I should find this people.” At this time he had never heard of the Methodists or their doctrines. At least such was his recollection in his later years. Soon afterwards, while still a youth, he received in the same manner a promise that the love of God should inspire him, and that he should be called to preach, and, if faithful, be the instrument of the conversion of many souls. He feared that *this* whispering came from the devil, especially as he had heard his father say that he did not intend to send any of his sons to college. Then, in answer to his prayer for a sign, came “the sweet impression: that the people I should find did not consider a college education as the essential qualification for a minister; yet that all who ministered must study to know the Scriptures, and other books, whereby they may have knowledge of men and things sufficient to teach men the will of God.”

There were many visions of this sort vouchsafed him, on which it is not our place here to pass judgment; as we also do not upon any of the views in theology held by him or others of whom we here speak. There are, however, we suppose, but few men who have thought deeply and anxiously upon any subject, and especially upon religion, but who have found impressed upon their mind thoughts, often seemingly expressed in words, coming from without themselves. Mr. Hibbard did not doubt that they had a divine origin. It was some time after this, that a Methodist itinerant preacher came to his father's house, and young Hibbard first heard of the sect. By consent of Mr. Hibbard, senior, the preacher held service, and the son exerted himself to gather an audience. From this time his destiny seemed to be fixed—that he should become a preacher of that order—although it was not fulfilled until after many struggles which are vividly depicted in his autobiography. Finally it was settled in a characteristic way, by an appeal to the Divine oracle. The “impression” came upon him powerfully while he was at work in the field. We omit many simply and powerfully told descriptions of the soul's conflicts with itself, as not within our province, but quote Mr. Hibbard's account of the method by which he finally decided upon his line of duty, because it is illustrative of the simplicity of heart and earnest belief in direct communication with the

Deity, which characterized the members of the new sects, as well as some of those who adhered to Congregationalism. He writes :

One day, when at work clearing up my fallow ground for a crop, having, as in days past, no strength to work, I thought, 'this will never do. I cannot work, and I am not happy in it as in former days. I ought to be submissive to the will of God. If the Lord does call me to preach, I ought to be submissive to the will of God. If the Lord does call me to preach I ought to say, 'Here, Lord, am I, send me.' But how shall I know that this is of the Lord and not a delusion?' It was then suggested to my mind, 'You have fasted and prayed, but you have not opened the Bible, and asked for direction from the Word of God.' Then I kneeled down and prayed that the Lord would direct me by his word; that if my impressions to preach were from Him, I might open the Bible on some text clearly expressing the duty of one called of God to preach. But if not, that I might open on a text expressing the danger of running before I was sent. I then went to my house to open my Bible solemnly; but, I must confess, with a secret desire that I might be delivered from the impression to preach. When I took up my Bible I shut my eyes and said in my heart, 'Now, Lord, let it be a fair lot.' I opened and found my finger on Ezekiel iii. 17, 18, 'Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand.' I read no further, but shut up the book and left the house in haste, blaming myself for taking this measure, because now I had less ground to excuse myself than before. I got to my field again, but a gloomy horror overspread my mind more than ever. I sat down and wept, and wished the Lord would take my life. For two hours I was but a little from distraction. How can I discharge my duty and be a minister? I must pay for my farm and get something for my wife and children to subsist upon, or it will be said, I am worse than an infidel, if I provide not for my own household. But to feel as I do, I cannot work. I fear, if I preach, I shall not do my duty; and I fear, if I do not, I shall be damned after all. O, if Calvinism were true, that I could not fall from grace, I would easily overcome this distress by leaving all to the irresistible grace of God, and say, 'Once in grace always in grace.' But I am torn and racked in every way.

Thus I struggled, until, exhausted with fatigue, I went and lay down on the damp ground, praying the Lord to take my life and have mercy on my soul. I was in hopes I should take cold and die. I dared

not go into the house, lest my wife should ask me what was the matter, and I should have to tell her my exercises. I slept about an hour and a half on the damp ground, and awoke much refreshed in body; and, like a child that had been whipped, more soft and docile in temper. I prayed, and begged the Lord to forgive my refractory temper. I felt ashamed of what I had done. I went to my work, but I could not work; then I again prayed; and at this time I resolved to go to the house and ask my wife to open the Bible with her eyes shut, and put in her finger, and read the verse her finger was upon, and if it was a call to the work of the ministry, I would receive it; I would no more resist, nor, Jonah-like, run from the Lord. I went in and informed her of my distress, the first time I had ever spoken to her about it, and how I had resisted the impression until, like Jonah, 'I was in misery and could do no work. I have fasted and prayed for an answer that would solve the doubt, and now I have come in to have you open the Bible, shutting your eyes until you place your finger on a text, and read the text your finger is on.'

She took the Bible and opened it in a hurry, without shutting her eyes, on John x: 13, and read, 'The hireling fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.' I said, 'My dear, you knew where that text was, and you opened it to reproach me for not having yielded to my duty; besides, you did not shut your eyes, and it is not a fair lot.'

She smiled to see me so earnest. I said, 'How dare you smile so before God? Why, this is an awful solemn time—you ought not to smile.' I took the Bible and said, 'Now let there be a fair lot; shut your eyes.' She did so, and opened on Luke ix: 60, and read, 'Jesus said unto him, let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.' I said, 'Why, my dear, there is no such text in the Bible; you have made it.' She burst into tears, reaching me the Bible, saying, 'There, read it.' While I was reading it, to my utter amazement, she said: 'I knew you would have to preach; I have given you up a long time ago.' I said, 'Well, this is of God; let us pray.' So we kneeled down, and all my horror of mind was gone in a moment—my soul was now again happy in God; though I mourned that I should have been unyielding to the impressions that had so long followed me. I prayed the Lord to forgive the stubbornness I had been so long guilty of. I said I will preach as well as I can; I will not refuse again if I am called upon.

Next, after his doubts whether his call to preach was of God or a delusion of Satan, the obstacle to his becoming a traveling preacher which most affected Mr. Hibbard was the consideration of his duty to provide for his family. "The economy of the Methodists," he writes, "left all in entire uncertainty respecting

the support of their preachers. The utmost that was promised was a bare supply of necessities, and this uncertain; so that I must reconcile myself to be poor all the days of my life, without the least prospect of ever obtaining the conveniences of this life." But, his wife assenting, he took up the burden which he believed God had imposed upon him; and, although his "difficulties were many, by reason of ignorance and poverty, left all," and, by direction of the presiding elder, in 1797, went with Rev. Mr. Stebbins on to the Pittsfield circuit, where he continued until June of the following year. In 1813, he was again stationed on this circuit, and met the trouble with the "Reformed Methodists" which has already been recounted. In 1814, being strongly in sympathy with the government, he volunteered to supply preaching for the army, and when a regiment of militia were called from Berkshire for the defense of Boston, Colonel Chamberlain appointed him his chaplain. On his return to Pittsfield he visited the prisoners at the Cantonment. After a long service in the cause which he had chosen, he died August 17, 1849, at Canaan, N. Y.

We have given a somewhat prolonged sketch of Mr. Hibbard, believing him to have been a representative man of his denomination in its earliest days in Pittsfield, and that a better idea would thus be presented of its state and struggles, than by any general statement regarding it as a whole. It is not often that a man reveals himself so fully to the reader as Mr. Hibbard evidently does in his memoirs.

The Methodists, as we have seen, were ardently zealous in the reprobation of those amusements and indulgences which they believed, in however remote a degree, to tend to excite the passions or to dissipate "serious" thought; the terms "serious" and "truly religious" being with them synonymous. In this they agreed with the Congregationalists of Puritanic days, and to a great degree with those of more recent times. But the members of the "standing-order" in the beginning of the nineteenth century held that there was a time to dance, and to be merry. In their views of social amusements, they did not widely, if at all, differ from the churches which are usually styled liberal.

But the Congregationalists, as a body and as individuals, were keenly alive to the irreligious, demoralizing and disorganizing tendencies of the age, which it must be remembered was that of the French republic, and of the scarcely less corrupt empire.

And no one would suspect the Congregational churches of Massachusetts of being lukewarm in their oppugnation of any sin which found its root in that soil. There were minds indeed—even among those who professed themselves members of the church—whose faith had been deeply undermined. But, as a mass, the community, which—so slight was the dissenting element in numbers—might be characterized as Congregational, had by no means lost its respect for religion either as the conservator of whatever is good in this life, or as the only true foundation for hope with regard to that life which is to come. Doubtless many of the clergy and the more serious minded of the church, held with the Methodists in regard to amusements; and, if the majority viewed them with a more lenient eye, it was from a sincere belief that they were not inconsistent with a religious life. It was no proof that all were not zealous in the performance of their duty as they understood it. To what degree that zeal extended may be judged by the action of the Association of Ministers in the county of Berkshire and the Northern Presbytery in the state of New York, at a joint meeting of those bodies, held in Berkshire county in the year 1800, when they recommended a plan for the better inculcation of religious truth upon the young.

This plan was in substance as follows: The Association and Presbytery advised that each of their ministers, and, where the churches were destitute of ministers, the deacons or some other meet persons selected for the purpose, should collect the children and youth, in a body or in divisions, as local circumstances might dictate, as often as he might judge expedient, and impress upon them the serious and weighty things of eternity by catechising, instruction and counsel; beginning and closing with prayer. The shorter Westminster catechism was recommended for use, as containing “a compendium of all the leading and most important doctrines and duties of religion, expressed in an easy and plain manner, sanctioned by long custom, and, by people in general, best known and understood.”

A significant recommendation was that ministers and “serious” people should use their influence to have the catechism taught in schools; “a practice which of late had grown into great disuse;” and also that the Holy Scriptures might be read, at least once a day, in the schools.

It was also recommended that the family-concert of catechising

and prayer, already suggested to some churches and congregations by individual members of the Association and Presbytery, should be warmly supported.

There were some further suggestions as to the methods of carrying the plan into effect, and that a report of its operation should be made by each minister to the body to which he belonged at the first meeting after September 1, 1801.

The plan was printed at Stockbridge in 1800, together with an address full of pious and fervent exhortation regarding the duty of parents and ministers towards the young. They say that many of the pious lament the growing neglect of catechising and instructing the rising generation; but after a strong presentation, according to the manner of that day of the fearful consequences of the neglect by parents of the souls of their children, they add: "It is now a time in which God is pouring out His Spirit in plentiful showers. Awake, and attend to your children. There is a shaking in the tops of the mulberry trees. God has gone forth. Bestir yourselves. Many people, some old, some young, have been brought into Christ's Church. * * * * Should the present favorable moment be neglected, the opportunity in a measure may be lost. Say not that nothing can be done. Attempts, with the blessing of God, may be followed by great and good consequences."

And, with other pious and eloquent exhortation and encouragement to faithfulness, the address closes.

The authors of this address will not be suspected of lukewarmness in their Master's cause.

CHAPTER VIII.

EARLY WOOLEN MANUFACTURES.

[1800-1812.]

State of American manufactures in 1800—First woolen mills in America—Arthur Scholfield—Birth, parentage and education—Emigrates to America—Commences business at Byfield—Removes to Pittsfield—Makes broadcloths, carding-machines, spinning-jennies and looms—The first Pittsfield factory—James Strandring's manufacture of comb-plates—Elkanah Watson's efforts for Berkshire woolen manufactures—Statement of his manufacture of broadcloth from his own merino wool—A woolen manufacturing company formed—It fails—Scholfield establishes a woolen manufactory—His difficulties—The Pittsfield Sun's statement of manufactures in 1809—Close of Arthur Scholfield's life.

PERHAPS the most galling grievances which Great Britain inflicted upon her American colonies—saving the blows aimed at the foundation of constitutional government—were the crippling restrictions imposed upon their manufactures, avowedly designed to crush them out of existence. And, in proportion as this injustice was bitterly felt by the colonists, was their desire to exercise their long-pent-up energies, and develop their natural resources, ardent and hopeful when independence made them masters of themselves and their country.

This desire was, however, not gratified until the new states had been taught by painful experience that internal dissensions, selfish rivalries, and enactments by which each little legislature sought, with unwise cunning, to obtain advantage over its neighbor, were even more fatal to their common—and not less to their individual—industrial interests, than it was possible for the most jealous foreign domination to be.

With the organization of the federal government in 1789, this experience terminated, and a brighter era dawned. Under the fostering action of the first congress, and the grand financial

policy of Hamilton, manufactures began to thrive; commerce received new vigor; and agriculture, which—from an overplus of production in proportion to the consumers of her products—had grown poor in the midst of her abundance, once more received an adequate reward for her labors.

The branches of manufacture to which attention was first directed were those described in a previous chapter, in which material that cumbered the fields, the hides left by the beef-packers, and other waste raw material, were transmuted into articles for which commerce offered a profitable market. But the opportunity to utilize otherwise valueless and incumbering substances was not the only circumstance which led to the large production in America, of iron, potash, leather and similar articles; while as yet the making of woolen cloth was confined to the narrow handloom; and cotton, which had little or no place, found a substitute in home-made linen. The difference was farther, and perhaps chiefly, accounted for by the comparative simplicity of the processes and machinery required by the branches of manufacture first prosecuted; the cheapness of the raw material rendering possible a profitable return from work every way wasteful, while, for the manufacture of fine woolen and cotton goods, skilled labor, delicate machinery and a refined fleece—neither of which was yet possible in America—were indispensable. The laws of Great Britain jealously prohibited the emigration of artisans and the exportation of machinery. The penalties for the infringement of these statutes had been greatly increased at the close of the revolutionary war; and they were executed with a success which seems less surprising when we remember that the agents of the government were aided, and their vigilance stimulated, by a rich and powerful body of men striving to retain a monopoly of the world's most lucrative trade. For years it proved impossible to obtain correct models of the great inventions by which Hargreave and Arkwright had given to England almost the exclusive manufacture of cotton. Nor did it prove less difficult to obtain proper machinery for the profitable manufacture of the higher classes of woolen goods. Possibly ship-owners and ship-masters trading to English ports, intimidated by severe penalties incurred by a violation of the statutes alluded to, and fearful of disturbing the commerce in which they were absorbed, aided in the enforcement of the laws against smuggling out machinery and machin-

ists, just as the same class of New Englanders, engaged in later days in commerce with the southern ports, aided in the recovery of slaves attempting to escape in their vessels. At all events, these laws were enforced, to the exclusion at least of the English improvements in machinery.

Another impediment, nearly as fatal, was found in the poor and costly character of the raw material used in the cotton and woolen manufactures of America, as compared with that employed in Great Britain. The latter country in 1787, imported about 33,000,000 pounds of cotton, mostly from the West Indies, East Indies and Turkey, whose markets she controlled, and in which the cheapness of labor enabled the planter to cleanse his produce more perfectly than could be afforded in the United States under the rude hand-processes then used. Indeed, in 1791, when the first successful cotton-mill in America was established, the whole crop did not exceed 2,000,000 pounds; and that, almost all, of an inferior quality, imperfectly cleansed.

But Whitney's gin, invented in 1793, rendered the process of cleansing cheap and perfectly effective. The Sea-island cotton, introduced into Georgia in 1786, was soon found to surpass every other variety for making the finest goods, and was grown wherever the climate and soil permitted. Better upland varieties were obtained. And the southern states of the Union became the cotton-growers of the world.

These happy changes at the south enabled the northern states to enter into a not altogether hopeless competition with England in the manufacture of cotton, at least for their home-market. Some years of the nineteenth century had, however, passed before this condition of things was well established. But then a desire to take advantage of it spread over New England; and we find Pittsfield joining with her successful projects for woolen manufactories, others for cotton-mills, which did not succeed.

In making the ruder fabrics, there was less difficulty with American wool than with cotton; but it was coarse and of a loose fiber, entirely unfit for even moderately-fine goods. There had been some efforts to improve the breeds of sheep by the introduction of English stock; but there probably was not a single merino in America until the year 1802, when Col. David Humphrey, who had been minister to Spain, and Chancellor Livingston, who had held the same position in France, brought home

from those countries flocks selected by themselves with great care.

The patriotic zeal of these gentlemen was imitated throughout the country; and—as we shall find in our account of the Berkshire Agricultural Society—with peculiar spirit and success in Pittsfield. In fact, she may fairly claim to stand among the foremost towns of the Union in refining the American fleece by the introduction of the merino. In the early improvement of woolen machinery, there can be no doubt of her pre-eminence.

The first woolen-mill in America, was erected at Hartford, and the *Pittsfield Chronicle* of October 12, 1789, states that it made between September 1, 1788 (probably the date at which it commenced operations), and September 1, 1789, five thousand yards of broadcloth, some of which sold at five dollars a yard. A writer in the *Boston Centinel*, quoted in the *Chronicle* of April 12, 1789, says that John Adams had received an elegant suit from this mill, in which he appeared as vice-president of the United States. Washington, when president-elect, visited the same mill in October, 1788, and ordered from it the suit of broadcloth in which he was inaugurated. He speaks of its product as “good, but not yet of the best quality, as were also their coatings, cassimeres, serges, and everlastings. * * * All the parts of the business were done at the mill, except the spinning. This was done by the country-people, who were paid by the cut.”

About the same time, a woolen-factory was started at Stockbridge;¹ but of what character we are not informed.

The imperfections in the Hartford cloth, mentioned by President Washington, were probably due to the coarseness of the wool, to the inequalities which would inevitably arise from the mode of spinning; and perhaps also, to unskillful dyeing. In the process of spinning, performed by the country-people, the carding was included.

This mill was in operation in 1791, and its fabrics were commended by Secretary Hamilton, in his celebrated report upon American manufactures, as having “attained a considerable degree of perfection, certainly surpassing anything which could be expected in so short a time under so great difficulties.” Our information regarding this factory and its product, is, neverthe-

¹Bishop's History of American Manufactures.

less, very indefinite; as none of those who speak of it were desirous, or perhaps even capable, of being critical, or technically accurate. President Washington's opinions are the most clearly expressed. We know nothing of the subsequent history of the enterprise; but it seems not to have had the influence anticipated for it, as a pioneer in American woolen-manufactures;¹ and their career rested until the introduction of finer raw material about the year 1800. Precisely with what justice absolute precedence can be claimed for Pittsfield in the revival of, and impulse given to, this great industry at that time, it is difficult for us to determine. A mill for the manufacture of fine broad-cloth, established by Chancellor Livingston at Poughkeepsie, was in successful operation in 1808. At what date it began operations we are not informed, but there is strong probability that a portion, if not all, of its machinery was manufactured by Arthur Scholfield at Pittsfield.

The name of Mr. Scholfield is so intimately connected with the claim of Pittsfield to priority in the foundation of the woolen-manufacture of the country, that a brief sketch of his life before his removal to this town, will not only be proper here, but will afford a convenient starting-point for the narration which succeeds it.

Arthur Scholfield, the son of a clothier of the same name, was born in 1757, at Saddlesworth, a town of Yorkshire, England, noted for its woolen-manufactures; and was apprenticed, at sixteen, to James Wrigley, another clothier of that town. Arthur's

¹Mr. James B. Hosmer, of Hartford, whose 91th birthday occurred September 27, 1875, while the present volume was in press, was, from his earliest youth, familiar with the manufactures of Hartford, and was connected as a clerk with the first woolen-factory. Before the text was written we attempted to obtain his evidence; but he was then very ill. A friend, Hon. Lucius M. Boltwood, has since obtained it for us, in the following statement: The company was formed April 23, 1783. The mill, which stood on the west bank of Little river at the foot of Mulberry street, was burned a few years ago. The wool-house is still standing on Gold street. The mill made excellent cassimeres, but the business did not pay, and was, Mr. Hosmer thinks, not continued beyond 1795. His memory is, that the mill used better wool than some of the present day do, and that it was spun harder. But this is very doubtful unless the wool was imported, and the testimony of Washington as to the mode of spinning incorrect. Possibly it may have been true, however, as to a brief portion of its later years, as Mr. Hosmer's reputation for accuracy is high.

signature to the indentures shows him to have received the rudiments of a common education ; and it was provided, in the articles of agreement, that he should still have two weeks "at Christmas to go to school:" not a very liberal allowance, to be sure, but enough to enable a quick-witted lad to refresh his school-learning.

That he was well-taught in the clothier's art is quite certain.

His father appears to have been of the better class of English artisans, and to have reared his family so that they might rise in the world by their own efforts. His son, Abraham, who died at his native place in 1826, and styled himself "merchant," in his will, by which he bequeathed property of very considerable value in mills, tenements, etc. The family still occupy respectable positions in Saddlesworth and other Yorkshire towns.

In the year 1793, Arthur, then at the age of thirty-six, sailed from Liverpool, on the 24th of March, in the ship "Perseverance" bound for Boston. He was accompanied by his brother John, who was married ; he himself being a bachelor. On their arrival, in their search for a tenement, they fell under the notice of Mr. Jedediah Morse, author of the then popular Geography and Gazetteer, who befriended them, and afterwards interested himself largely in their behalf.

Their first venture, after a few weeks' examination of the ground, was in June, when in company with John Shaw, a spinner and weaver, who had accompanied them from England, they began the manufacture of woolen-cloth, by hand. John, on the first day of the partnership, expended from his own funds, for wool seventy-one pounds, three shillings and six pence ; for lumber, to build the machinery, two pounds, eight shillings and eight pence. John built the first machinery himself ; completing a hand-loom, a spinning-jenny, etc., by the first of August, and charging the company twelve pounds and three shillings for his labor. The first product of this loom—twenty-four and a half yards of broadcloth—was sold for sixteen pounds and sixteen shillings ; and twenty yards of mixed broadcloth for twelve pounds.

"Mr. Morse was an interested observer of all this work, which was carried on in John's house in Charlestown, and, seeing that broadcloth could be made in this country to advantage, and finding that Arthur and John understood the construction of the most important machinery, used in England for that purpose, he introduced them to some persons of wealth in Newburyport, and

they were by them persuaded to remove to that place for the purpose of starting a factory, with improved machinery, to be constructed under their immediate supervision."

Their first work in Newburyport was a carding-machine, which was put together in a room in "Lord" Timothy Dexter's stable, and there operated by hand, for the purpose of showing its operations to parties whom it was desired to engage in the enterprise of the factory.

This factory was started at Byfield, complete in 1795, the building being three stories high, and one hundred feet long. The first carding-machine was made single. Afterwards two double machines were placed in the factory. Arthur was employed as overseer of the carding, John as overseer of the weaving and agent in the purchase of wool. John Shaw was employed as a weaver.¹

"The business at Byfield was conducted prosperously, and was the first successful manufacture of woolen-goods in the United States; all previous attempts having been conducted by hand, and rendered unprofitable by reason of imperfect machinery."²

John Scholfield, in one of his wool-purchasing tours, found a mill-privilege in Montville, Conn., which in 1798, he hired for fourteen years, and with his brother established a woolen-factory upon it. Here Arthur remained two years, in which he married Miss Amy Crafts. In the year 1800, he removed to Pittsfield.

Here he found the clothier's business in a flourishing condition, but confined to the fulling and finishing of cloths, includ-

¹ The machinery of this mill, although built under the direction of the Scholfields, is stated in the History of American Manufactures, to have been made by Strandring, Armstrong and Guppy, of Newburyport, the senior partner being probably James Strandring, afterwards manufacturer of comb-plates and spindles in Pittsfield. Byfield is a village of the town of Newbury. The owners of the factory were William Bartlett & Co., of Newburyport.

² We quote this paragraph from an elaborate article upon The First Woolen Mills in America, published in the Boston Commercial Bulletin of October, 1873, and prepared from original papers, and oral information, furnished by a son of John Scholfield. From the same source we have collected most of the facts concerning the life of the Scholfields, at Charlestown and Byfield. Another authority—Bishop's History of American Manufactures—states that, having proved unprofitable in their hands, the shares of the Scholfields were, one by one, transferred to William Bartlett, and by him to John Lee, one of the original company, who in 1806, converted the mill into a cotton-factory.

ing sometimes, but not always, the dyeing. Carding, spinning and weaving were done in private families and with primitive machinery, with tedious labor and imperfect product. Even the processes left to the professional clothier were conducted with machinery that, although improved from that placed in Elder Valentine Rathbun's fulling-mill in 1770,¹ was still exceedingly imperfect. Rathbun's mill, after lying idle for awhile, had been purchased in 1800, by Dan Monroe, who supplied it with improved machinery. Deacon Eli Maynard, who had succeeded James Ensign in the Water street mill, had made a similar change. Deacon Barber, in the mill at Wahconah, built in 1776, used the best machinery of that period.

With the growth of the neighboring country, business increased, and the clothiers found abundant employment. But while in the manufacture of homespun woolen-cloth, the fulling and finishing were done with tolerable economy and fair excellence, the product on the whole was inferior, and the processes by which it was obtained were slow, laborious and imperfect. This, Arthur Scholfield undertook to remedy. What qualifications he had for the task the reader may judge from the foregoing account of his experience. "His memory," says Mr. Clapp, "was remarkably tenacious, and being a good mathematician, he was able to enter into all the nice calculations required in such a labor."

The processes to whose improvement he addressed himself were carding, spinning and weaving. Heretofore the wool had been prepared in rolls by the primitive little hand-cards, a tedious proceeding, whose product was apt to be uneven, and sometimes flimsy. The spinning upon the old-fashioned hand-wheel was liable to the same defects. The weaving was done upon a narrow hand-loom, which made a coarse cloth, generally twenty-three inches wide. And, for all these machines, Mr. Scholfield undertook to introduce the labor-saving and more efficient inventions which were in use in England.

He completed his first carding-machine, November 1, 1801. Its advent was thus modestly announced in the *Pittsfield Sun* :

¹ Described by Thaddeus Clapp, in his Historical statement before the Association of Berkshire Manufacturers, as "none of your new-fangled German inventions; but an old-fashioned, double-action crank-mill, driven by a three-foot open-bucket water-wheel, only warranted to run in a high freshet, or a long spell of weather."

Arthur Scholfield respectfully informs the inhabitants of Pittsfield and the neighboring towns, that he has a carding-machine half a mile west of the meeting-house, where they may have their wool carded into rolls for 12 1-2 cents per pound; mixed 15 1-2 cents per pound. If they find the grease, and pick and grease it, it will be 10 cents per pound, and 12 1-2 cents mixed. They are requested to send their wool in sheets, as they will serve to bind up the rolls when done. Also a small assortment of woollens for sale.

Pittsfield, November 2, 1801.

This machine was set up in the building erected on the dam a little north of the West street bridge over the Housatonic, and dignified by the title of "the Pittsfield Factory," a building which may well be called the cradle of Pittsfield manufactures; for here, as Mr. Scholfield informs us in an advertisement of May, 1802, "were carried on, under different firms, dyeing of wool of various colors, making of chairs of various kinds, cut and wrought nails, marble monuments, Rumford fireplaces, common stone for building, hulling and perling of barley, etc., etc." After such a list one would like to know what the double *et cetera* indicated.

But, to return to Scholfield's carding-machine: the good housewives were at first rather shy of the innovation, and Mrs. Jared Ingersoll,¹ who sent the first fleece, confessed that she did so with great doubts as to the result. But the experiment proved successful. The rolls were more firm and even than those made by hand; the cost was not great, and the saving of time was considerable. Others gave the carding-machines a trial, with the like result, and soon one of the most frequent sights in the streets was a wagon wending its way to the Pittsfield factory with a load of wool, or returning with the rolls nicely wrapped in linen sheets, pinned with thorns.

Capt. Hosea Merrill was an early friend of Scholfield and furnished lumber to him for his machines; but his good wife thought it prudent to risk but little in her first trial of his carding. When the rolls came home there was a little domestic scene, in which the characteristics of the different ladies of the family were exhibited. Mrs. Merrill and her two daughters brought out their spinning-wheels to try the rolls prepared for

¹ Readers of our first volume will remember this lady as the intrepid widow of Colonel John Brown.

them. After working silently for awhile, one of the young ladies remarked, with a satisfied air, "This is good." "Yes," said her mother, after waiting a little longer, and with a little more emphasis, "*it is* good." The other daughter spun steadily on, and when she had finished, said quietly: "Mother, I can do twice as much spinning with these rolls as with the old hand-carded things!" And it actually proved that, one and a half runs of yarn having been an average day's spinning with the hand-carded rolls, three could be easily spun after Scholfield's carding.¹

In May, 1802, Scholfield advertised that he should give no credit; that if the wool was not properly "sorted, clipped and cleansed," he should charge an extra penny per pound; and that he would make no abatement for wool that was greased, as "he made use of none but good grease, and that at his own expense." He had learned something and become independent enough to profit by his experience—had he not been of too easy and generous a nature to adhere to his wise determination.

The carding-machines were not made personally by Scholfield, but by carpenters and machinists, working under his direction, from models and drawings prepared by him. He soon, in the same manner, began the manufacture of machines for sale; and in 1806—to the great satisfaction of other carders—he abandoned the carding of wool altogether, in order to devote himself exclusively to this business and to perfecting models for looms and spinning-jennies, the making of which he shortly after added to it. His immediate successors in the carding-business were Alexander and Elisha Ely; but the carding of wool with machines manufactured by him was entered into as a business by several persons in the county. For some years the greatest obstacle which he encountered was the necessity of himself, or by his workmen, preparing the comb-plates by hand; punching and filing the teeth one by one, and with very rude appliances. But in 1814, his friend, James Strandring, succeeded in smuggling out from England, a teeth-cutting machine, with which he established, at Pontoosuc, a small manufactory of comb-plates, to which he afterwards added the making of spindles. It was probably the smuggling exploit of Strandring that gave rise to the tradition that Scholfield returned to England to refresh his memory by an inspection of the machinery which he was intend-

¹ A run was twenty knots, and a knot forty threads.

ing to imitate. In fact he never returned to his native country after he first left it; for the excellent reason that the British government, through the vigilance of its consul at Boston, was sure to be well informed of his infringement of its jealously-guarded monopoly, by his proceedings at Charlestown and Byfield; and would have been sure, had he set foot in his majesty's dominions, to oppose a very effectual *ne exeat* under the law forbidding the emigration of artisans and machinists.

When Strandring's tooth-cutting machine reached Pittsfield, it was placed in the attic of a little shop near the river, at Pontotocus, to which the only access was by a ladder, and through a trap-door which was always closed to Yankee curiosity; none being suffered to pass it except Strandring, Scholfield and Wrigley. The machine did its work rapidly and well, and Strandring not only prepared the comb-plates for Scholfield's carding-machines, but made various kinds of saws, and re-cut old ones which were brought to him from a wide range of country. Of course this mysteriously-concealed biter of iron was an object of the most intense curiosity—not always of an entirely disinterested character—to all the region roundabout. Among other incidents illustrating this thirst for forbidden knowledge, Mr. Phillips Merrill, relates the following: He was one day in Strandring's shop, when a Shaker entered with a saw to be re-cut; and as the machinist turned to mount his ladder, offered him five dollars to be permitted to see the operation. "Not for five hundred?" replied Strandring, who, even if he had been off his guard before, would have had his suspicions aroused; for, however moderate a sum five dollars might be for some purposes, it was rather more than the Shaker brethren were wont to pay for the gratification of a profitless curiosity. But, turning to young Merrill, he beckoned him into his dusty arcanum; remarking, "There, Phil! you're the first Yankee that ever saw that machine." Strandring carried on his little manufactory for some years, adding spindles to its product, but he died in middle age, a somewhat frail constitution being unequal to the demands of the free living which prevailed among the Yorkshire artisans in Pittsfield.¹

¹James Wrigley, mentioned above in connection with Scholfield and Strandring, in like manner fell a victim to the fashionable dissipations of the day. He was probably a son of Arthur Scholfield's old master in the cloth-

Scholfield's carding-machines had a wide reputation and were sold all over the country. Several, as we have said, were set up in Berkshire. The price of those made the first year is said to have been over thirteen hundred dollars. In 1806, he advertised double machines for two hundred and fifty-three dollars each, without the cards, or four hundred dollars including them; and picking-machines at thirty dollars each. The prices were afterwards still further reduced. His annual manufacture amounted probably to from twenty to thirty double machines, at fair prices.

But he was not without his troubles. Some of his customers turned out to be rogues; in two or three instances representing themselves as belonging to places which, when they were sought for payment, denied all knowledge of them. Others, ruined by the financial disasters of the day, were unable to pay. His losses from bad debts were considerable, and he was also annoyed by competition. In an advertisement of 1804—after informing the public that he continued to card wool on the old terms, and hoped to give general satisfaction, as he “had been to great expense for machinery both in quantity and quality,” he adds:

He has carding-machines for sale, built under his immediate inspection, upon a new and improved plan, which he is determined to sell on the most liberal terms, and will give drafts and other instructions to those who wish to build for themselves; and cautions all whom it may concern to beware how they are imposed upon by uninformed speculating companies, who demand more than twice as much for machines as they are really worth.

The disjointed political condition of the times also troubled Mr. Scholfield; and, just after the act laying the embargo on foreign commerce, he wrote thus to his brother John at Montville:

PITTSFIELD, July 11, 1808.

BROTHER JOHN: Yours of the 4th of June is received. You say you hardly know how you are doing; for there was an Imbargo laid last December, and it still continues. The Imbargo is here too, and

ier's art. He was certainly associated with him at Byfield and Pittsfield, to some extent, in his business undertakings. He was a man of fine personal appearance and of intelligence. In the procession of the first cattle-show of the Berkshire Agricultural society, he was drawn upon a gaily-decorated platform, neatly dressed in black broadcloth and small clothes, and wearing a cocked hat, while he busily worked at one of Scholfield's looms: affording one of the most striking and best-remembered features of that occasion.

likely to stay, for what I see. It has swindled me out of about \$1,500—for besides what I shall lose by failures, I have twenty-two machines on hand, besides pickers. They were all engaged last summer, and if times had not turned, I should have had the money for them now. If I had left business the spring before last, it would have been much to my interest; but at that time the Imbargo was not thought of, except by King Jefferson and his party, and as they can't do wrong, we must put up with it. I have often thought you might have done better by moving back into the country; but, as things are now, there is no doing anything anywhere.

ARTHUR SCHOLFIELD.

Mr. Scholfield's advertisement of a small quantity of woollens for sale in 1801, leads us to believe that he commenced weaving soon after his removal to town; but we have no distinct mention of broadcloths until 1804, when he offered a few pieces of gray-mixed to several merchants of the village, who were all afraid to purchase. The goods were, however, sold in a larger market, and a few weeks afterwards Josiah Bissell, a leading store-keeper, brought home from New York two pieces of cloth which he had purchased for the foreign article. Scholfield was sent for to give an opinion upon them, and had the pleasant triumph of exhibiting to Mr. Bissell the private mark, which proved them to be the same goods which he had so lately rejected.

Still, Mr. Scholfield's labors and successes must have been little known to, or have made little impression upon, his townsmen; for, in April, 1808, a correspondent of the *Sun* wrote as follows:

MR. ALLEN: Some have doubted the practicability of our success in the establishment of woollen-manufactories; and others have foolishly held in derision the importation and the value of fine wool of the Spanish breed. To such I request that you would hold up the following advertisement from an Albany paper: * * * G. W. & I. PORTER, *Merchant Tailors, No. 66 State street, Albany*, have just had come to hand from the manufactory at Poughkeepsie, best superfine broad-cloth, made of the wool of the Spanish merino breed of sheep, imported by Chancellor Livingston. This cloth, for quality and beauty, is not exceeded by any imported.

A still more marked oversight of Mr. Scholfield occurred about the same time. While the English clothier was perfecting the machinery and minor details of his quasi factory, some improvement began in American wools; and in 1807, Elkanah Watson brought to Pittsfield the merino ram and ewe, whose exhibition

in the fall of that year, under the old Elm on the park, proved the germ of the Berkshire Agricultural Society's cattle-shows.

The next June, Mr. Watson had the wool of these sheep made into a piece of blue broadcloth, by "artists" whom he styles "the best in the country." "It far excelled," he says, "any (American) fabric which has yet appeared." Samples of it were exhibited in the principal cities, and among the letters which he received, concerning them, was one from Chancellor Livingston, in which that eminent and judicious friend of American industry wrote: "The samples you have sent me of your cloth are full and satisfactory proofs of our ability to manufacture as good cloth as we should wish to wear, as well as of the great importance of cultivating the merino breed in preference to any other."¹

A detailed account of the manufacture of this cloth, and of its expense per yard, written by Mr. Watson to Rev. Dr. Shepard, of Lenox, was printed in the *Sun*, of November 12, 1808, and widely copied. The essential portions are given below :

I am happy in being able to answer correctly your queries respecting the width and cost of the superfine Berkshire broadcloth in which I am now clothed ; having been very exact in the first essay made in this county.

On the 10th of June last, my Spanish ram and ewe were sheared, and yielded, including tags, eight pounds and four ounces of wool.

I received in rolls,	6 lbs. 11 oz.
Tags and cuttings,	1 lb.
Waste 7 per cent.,	

First weight,	8 lbs. 4 oz.
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This was spun and wove in a superior style *by the Shakers*, who delivered me nine and a half yards of cloth, one and a quarter yards wide. The cloth was dressed by Mr. Maynard, who delivered me, after fulling, dyeing and finishing, seven and a half yards of cloth full thirty inches wide. The whole cost was as follows :

Carding 6 lbs. 11 oz. wool,	\$1 09
Spinning and weaving,	3 98
Fulling, dyeing, etc.,	2 85

Total cost of cloth,	\$7 92
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The cloth, as it is finished, is considered by competent judges to be

¹ Watson's Men and Times of the Revolution.

worth three dollars and fifty cents a yard; and, allowing this to be just, the following is an estimate of the profits :

8 lbs. 4 oz. wool, unwashed, at \$1.50 per pound, . . .	\$12 37
Neat cost as above,	7 92
Clear profits, 25 per cent.,	5 96

7 1-2 yards at \$3.50 per yard,	\$26 25
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Hence it is unequivocally ascertained that my wool, in the state it was shown, is fairly worth one dollar fifty cents a pound; besides leaving a handsome profit for the manufactory. Or in other words, the value of \$26.25, in seven and a half yards of cloth, cost me seven dollars and ninety-two cents, exclusive of the wool as shorn, or two dollars and twenty-two cents a pound, putting profits out of the question. The value of the cloth, as estimated above, is considered low; for imported broadcloth is about fifty-six inches wide, exclusive of list, or twenty-eight for the half. Mine is thirty. This difference I have not noticed.

Watson continued this manufacture of broadcloth by proxy, and in 1812, took the Berkshire Agricultural Society's premium upon it. Before the latter date he became acquainted with, and complimented, the merits of Mr. Scholfield. It is singular that he should not have done so still earlier.

It was certainly a remarkable and very happy coincidence which brought together in Pittsfield, independently of, and unknown to, each other, two men, each in his specialty so essential to the building up of its woollen-manufacture.

In the year 1809, several companies for the manufacture of woollen-goods—frequently connecting with it that of cotton-cloth—were formed in the interior of Massachusetts. Among them were one at Pittsfield, and one at Stockbridge. The organization at Pittsfield originated in a meeting held, January 4th, at Captain Merrick's inn, when Colonel Joshua Danforth presided and Theodore Hinsdale, Jr., was secretary. This meeting

Resolved, That, whereas, from the exertions which have already been made by a few individuals, and from the indications that many others will zealously engage the ensuing season, in the introduction and general spread of the invaluable merino sheep in this county, this meeting are fully impressed with the opinion that the establishment of an extensive woollen-factory for fine cloths and stockings, in this town, will greatly promote the interests of this county by manufacturing a new and valuable raw material within the same, in preference to its future exportation.

Resolved, That the introduction of spinning-jennies, as is practiced in England, into private families, is strongly recommended by this meeting to the attention of the public; since one person can manage by hand by the operation of a crank, twenty-four spindles, or more, at one time; and it is by these labor-saving machines that the American people will successfully rival the Europeans in many important articles; and the establishment of an extensive factory under legislative patronage will always go hand and hand with private enterprise, to the great benefit of individuals.

To carry the objects of the meetings into practical operation, Elkanah Watson, James D. Colt, Jr., and Simon Larned were appointed to apply to the legislature for a charter and to take such other measures as they deemed proper in the premises; Colonel Danforth and Captain Merrick were requested to receive proposals for a suitable mill-site, sufficient land for the erection of the necessary buildings and "such hydraulic works as might be necessary."

The legislature incorporated Simon Larned, Elkanah Watson, Joshua Danforth, James D. Colt, Jr., Jared Ingersoll, Oren Goodrich and such others as they might associate with themselves as "The Pittsfield Woolen and Cotton Factory," and at a meeting of the corporators, in September, 1809, James D. Colt, Jr., was chosen clerk; it was determined that the stock of the company should consist of one thousand shares of the par value of twenty dollars each. The meeting was adjourned until the second Wednesday of the following November. A communication in the *Sun* of January 24, 1810, denies a statement in the *Reporter* that "The company had completed their machinery, and had actually gone into operation under the able management of Mr. Scholfield." The writer says that no assessment had ever been paid on the shares, but that Mr. Scholfield "had commenced manufacturing on a small scale, and entirely at his own risk, without any kind of assistance from the said company."

About this time a New York gentleman wrote to one of the corporators, that there could be no more favorable opportunity for commencing operations; British cloths having risen enormously, a whole cargo being sold by the bale at Philadelphia, in December, 1809, at fifteen dollars a yard. But the company proceeded no farther, being crippled by the failure of the Berkshire bank, of which the principal members were either directors or large stockholders.

Mr. Scholfield, however, having experienced an effect from the "Imbargo" different from that which he contemplated at the date of his letter in 1808—although it did not restore to him a monopoly of the manufacture of machinery—was encouraged to enter into the woollen-manufacture upon the small scale alluded to by the *Sun's* correspondent.

This enterprise of 1809, was, like most of the establishments up to that time, not in all respects what we now commonly understand by a "factory;" i. e., an establishment in which all the processes of manufacture are carried on in immediate succession, under one head and ordinarily under one roof.

In 1806, as we have said, Mr. Scholfield, in order to devote himself more exclusively to the making of carding-machines, spinning-jennies, and looms, sold his wool-carding business to Alexander and Elisha Ely, who carried on the manufacture of marble monuments, fireplaces, "etc." in the same building—the old mill of multitudinous uses. But, notwithstanding the lively demand for American cloths caused by the exclusion and high prices of English goods, the market for machinery did not recover from the glut mentioned in Mr. Scholfield's letter of 1808. And as Alexander Ely, the surviving partner in the carding-business, was also disheartened by bad debts which he had allowed to accumulate during the scarcity of cash in the two preceding years, Scholfield repurchased it; and, encouraged by the increasing demand for American cloths, made changes and improvements in the "Pittsfield Factory," which made it more worthy of its name.

The spinning-jennies and looms, which were both run by hand, were placed in a building newly-erected for the purpose, on the east bank of the river just below the bridge. It was afterwards known as "the old red mill." The carding-machines were retained in the original mill which stood on the same side of the river just above the bridge. The stone-banking, built along the river to receive the building, still remains. In the pressure of business during the war, a few looms were afterwards placed in an addition which was built to the cottage where Scholfield lived and died, and which is still standing on the south side of West street next to the west side of the river. There were few houses in town where there were busier thoughts or merrier hours.

The fulling and finishing of the cloth manufactured by Schol-

field in this cluster of little factories, were done at the clothier's works on Elm street, carried on successively by Eli Maynard, Maynard and Allen, and Jonathan Allen, 2d,—the distance between which and the factories was a little over a mile.

But, while the continued improvements in machinery and raw material were tending toward the combination of all the processes of manufacture in a proper factory, the clothiers' business, in its old form, had grown to an importance which it did not lose for years, and which proved of great value to the country in the second war with Great Britain.

In 1805, "a brother-clothier," proposed, through the *Sun*, the organization of a society of his fellow-craftsmen "for the laudable purpose of investigating chemical liquids, and to improve in making and dressing cloth:" which, in his opinion, "would be as useful and honorable to the county, as a missionary, or any other society whatever." And such a society seems to have been formed, although it did not long continue. So far as the art of dyeing was concerned, the necessity of improvement by some means was undoubted. That their colors were not fast, was long the prevailing defect of American cloths. White edges were the distinguishing mark by which their nationality was detected. Daniel Webster long remembered his sorrow when a boy, and crying with vexation, because the blue, on a rainy day, washed out of his new outer garments, and into his shirt. And Hon. Phineas Allen used to boast with humorous zest of his patriotic persistence in wearing Scholfield's earlier Pittsfield blues, although they crocked him as though he had been dipped in an indigo-pot.

While Scholfield was, as a matter of business, pushing his improvements in machinery, and Watson, as a matter of personal pride and of patriotism, was urging, by example, instruction, and argument, the improvement of Berkshire wools; other citizens of more or less prominence joined them heartily in their efforts. It was justly considered, by almost all the more intelligent part of the community, that there was no act of more true or more effective patriotism than to establish a new branch of manufactures, or to introduce some improvement in husbandry. The newspapers recorded every attempt and every achievement of this kind, with abundant praise, and were profuse in teachings and theories; which were more correct, and less visionary, than

could have been expected. Indeed, considering that almost every enterprise in cloth-manufacture was as yet an experiment untried in America, and was to be undertaken by men of little experience, urged on by those of less; it is wonderful how few errors there were as to general principles and long results, however much they may have underestimated immediate difficulties, and overlooked their deficiencies in skilled labor. This may be, perhaps, accounted for by the fact that some of the writers and speakers upon these subjects had been for years residents in Europe, and close observers, under favorable circumstances, of the agriculture and manufactures of its most prosperous nations. Others were diligent students of the best books upon those subjects. In Pittsfield, Mr. Watson, in particular, was remarkably well qualified to be a teacher in these subjects, having long been a resident of France, in close contact with its manufactories, and having visited England, Holland and Belgium, studying with keen and envious eyes, their highly-cultivated farms, their superb flocks and herds, and their factories, where skill in the useful arts was carried to the highest perfection then attainable. Thomas Melville, who succeeded Mr. Watson as the leading advocate of patriotic effort in this direction—a little after the period of which we write—had almost an identical experience. Both these gentlemen were frequent contributors to the columns of the *Sun*, whose antipathy to England gave an added zest to its zeal in building up rivals to its manufactures. Rev. Thomas Allen, and his son Jonathan, paid great attention to this subject, and gave it the aid of their pens. Ezekiel Bacon, and indeed all the capable writers among the democrats, manifested their interest in the same way.

The loss of the files of the *Reporter* prevents our knowledge of the contributions of federalists to this class of literature; but David Campbell, James D. Colt, Lemuel Pomeroy and others certainly gave very valuable practical aid to the movement.

In November, 1809, the *Sun* published a long and carefully-prepared article upon Berkshire manufactures, from which it appears that an attempt had just been made to ascertain the extent and progress of manufactures in the county. And, although the responses of those to whom application had been made for information was not so general as was desired, they afford a pretty satisfactory idea of the facts in the case. Returns

were received from ten towns, showing the following production of woolen goods for the year 1808 :

Lenox, 3,030 yds.,	Pittsfield, 15,270 yds.,
Lanesboro, 5,000 yds.,	Gt. Barrington, 4,400 yds.,
Hinsdale, 2,000 yds.,	Stockbridge, 3,250 yds.,
Sandisfield, 5,441 yds.,	Tyringham (estimated), 5,450 yds.,
Cheshire, 6,960 yds.,	Alford (estimated), 4,400 yds.
Total, 55,212 yds.	

Of the amount credited to Pittsfield, about five thousand yards were dressed at a shop near Richmond—Daniel Stearns, at Barkersville—and were manufactured, in a “good measure, in that town.” There were twenty other towns in the county, and although some of them were small, and some had no fulling-mills, it was supposed that the total product of the Berkshire looms was at least a hundred thousand yards. The cloths were made mostly of the common wool of the county, three-quarters of a yard wide; and were estimated to be worth rather more than a dollar a yard.¹

From this the writer in the *Sun* draws a lesson :

Here then is a single branch of manufacture, carried on principally in private families, at a very trifling expense, and interfering very little with the great business of the farmer, which yields to this small county—consisting by the last census of about 33,000 souls—more than \$100,000, being more than three dollars to each person, of all ages and sexes. It is easy to see how greatly the wealth, comfort and happiness of our county are promoted by pursuits of this sort, and how far they tend to increase and invigorate the solid sinews of national wealth. It is equally obvious, how easy it would be for our farmers to double the amount of this branch of manufactures in *quantity*, even by the increase of the common wool of our county; and equally so to quadruple it in *value*, by cultivating the finer species of wool which is now happily brought within the reach of every one.

Statements and arguments like this were frequent in the Pittsfield newspapers during the first quarter of the present century, and, although we may have space to copy, or even allude to,

¹In 1811, Scholfield advertised his prices as follows: for carding, twelve and a half cents per pound, for common or quarter-blood wool; for half-blood, sixteen cents; for full-blood, twenty-five cents per pound; for manufacturing, thirty cents to one dollar twenty-five cents per yard according to quality for 5-4 cloth delivered at the loom. Broadcloths, double that price.

only a few of them, we must bear testimony to their great efficacy in advancing the cause of domestic manufactures. The product of 1808 was certainly a very creditable one, and a noble testimony to the industry of Berkshire households; but it was considerably less than Berkshire looms, under a more perfect organization of labor, and with more perfect appliances, now often send out in a single day; while, although the quality of the goods is greatly improved, the cost to the consumer is but slightly, if at all, enhanced.

The hopeful condition of the woollen-manufacture in 1809, is attributed by the *Sun's* correspondent "very much to the carding-machines now in general use, and the newly-constructed spinning-jennies lately made by the ingenious Mr. Scholfield." The conclusion of this article is full of information, and we quote it:

These machines [the spinning-jennies] go with from twenty to thirty spindles, upon which a single woman can spin from twenty to thirty runs¹ of fine yarn per day in the best manner. A few of them are already in successful operation in this vicinity, and can be conveniently worked in any private family. The cost of them is about fifty dollars, and one of them is sufficient to do the spinning for a number of families, who can join in the purchase.

The cost of foreign cloths of fine texture is already so high that few can afford to wear them. And a number of pieces have been made in this town which sell readily for three dollars per yard—three-quarters wide—which are in every point equal to foreign broadcloth which costs eight dollars; leaving to the manufacturer a profit of more than a dollar a yard. The gentleman before-mentioned is engaged in getting into operation a manufactory of fine cloths, which there is no doubt will succeed with equal advantage to the undertakers and the public. * * *

We have not time to notice as they ought to be noticed, several other valuable branches of manufacture which have grown up among us, within two years past, particularly the *valuable and extensive one of sail duck and cotton bagging*, now in operation in this town, at which it is understood more than twenty thousand yards of the former, and a large but unascertained quantity of the latter have been made the year past; affording a vast profit to the enterprising undertakers, consuming a great quantity of the raw material of flax, and thus encouraging its growth and increase, and employing a great number of the poorer classes of people in its operations.

¹ It will be recollected that, under the old system, one and a half runs was considered a good day's work in spinning wool prepared by the old-fashioned card, and three for wool carded by Scholfield.

Many of the same remarks might be applied to the manufactory of muskets and small-arms, which has been pretty extensively carried on here for the year past, and at which more than a thousand have been made, and sold by contract to the state of New York.¹

In the year 1809, then, a very interesting period was reached in the history of Pittsfield woolen-manufactures. A deep and practical feeling had been created in favor of improvements in the breed of sheep for the purpose of refining their fleece. Some very creditable cloths had been produced; and a very remarkable advance had been made in other essential particulars. Arthur Scholfield had brought his carding and picking machines, his spinning-jennies and looms, to a high degree of perfection; and was manufacturing them, largely, for sale at home and abroad. He had also established a small factory for the manufacture of fine broadcloths. Under the impulse of his improved machinery, and encouraged also by the political state of the country and the world, the clothier-business was exceedingly prosperous. A number of the most prominent business men of the town had been incorporated as a cotton and woolen manufacturing company; and, although the enterprise had been checked by the pecuniary embarrassments resulting from the failure of the Berkshire bank, it was only for a time, and it was succeeded very shortly by two successful projects of a similar kind.

We here intermit our account of this branch of industry, to give place to the early history of the Berkshire Agricultural Society, which had at this stage of its progress an important influence upon it.

But, as Arthur Scholfield's operations, after this date, were mostly in connection with other persons, we will here finish the general story of his life.

After the war of 1812, the extreme depression of manufactures rendered his affairs unprosperous; and, in 1818, he was advised to apply to congress for relief in consideration of his early services to the American woolen-manufacture. He was, however, although in great need, distrustful of the project; and, the changes

¹ The *Sun* containing this article has the following paragraph: The Hon. Mr. Bacon left town on Monday last, for Washington. And it is with great pleasure we add, that he was dressed in a full suit of HOMESPUN, manufactured in this town, and a part of it by his amiable and patriotic lady.

of representation in the congressional district operating against him, it appears to have been abandoned.

Mr. Scholfield kept up his efforts to sustain himself, bravely ; but he never achieved pecuniary success, or even recovered the position he had lost. He gave up his interest in the "Pittsfield Factory," and in June, 1821, the following advertisement points him out as doing business on a small scale at Goodrich's mill, which occupied the site of the present Wahconah flouring-mill :

UNCLE ARTHUR,

At Goodrich's factory, one mile north of the meeting-house, will card or manufacture, either by the yard or on shares, either in the flannel or finished. And for carding, if it will accommodate customers, I will take half in such produce as I shall want for my family. The other half must be cash when the rolls are delivered ; for oil is a cash article, and must be paid for.

ARTHUR SCHOLFIELD.

Pittsfield, June 3, 1821.

In such humble manner was the father of the Pittsfield woolen manufacture struggling for a livelihood in his old age. And thus he struggled on to the last.

Mr. Scholfield died, March 27, 1827, at the age of seventy years and six months, and was buried in the old first burial ground in the rear of the Baptist church. When that ground was secularized, his remains were removed to the new Pittsfield cemetery.

CHAPTER IX.

BEFORE THE WAR.

[1800-1812.]

Business-activity—Establishment and failure of the Berkshire bank—Other business-losses—Building of a democratic hotel—Names of prominent democrats—Park square and its business-surroundings—Drum-factory—Jonathan Allen, 2d—Pomeroy's gun-factory—Ordination of Rev. William Allen.

ABOUT 1806, banking institutions were springing up, in most of the towns of New England where a little capital had been accumulated; and, in February of that year, Gov. Strong signed the charter of the Berkshire bank; the incorporators named being Simon Larned, Timothy Childs, Joshua Danforth, Daniel Pepoon, David Campbell, Jr., James D. Colt, Jr., Thomas Allen, Jr., Theodore Hinsdale, Jr., Ebenezer Center and Joseph Merrick. The capital stock was fixed at seventy-five thousand dollars, all to be paid in gold and silver coin previous to October 6, 1806, and the issue of bills was restricted to one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The bank was organized July 5, 1807, by the choice of the following directors: Simon Larned, John W. Hulbert, Joshua Danforth and Daniel Pepoon of Pittsfield, Joseph Goodwin of Lenox, Andrew Dexter of Boston, and James D. Colt, Jr., of Pittsfield. Simon Larned was chosen president, and Ebenezer Center cashier. The influence of political feeling was indicated by the fact that here, where a harmonious co-operation was essential, democrats and federalists were carefully made to alternate in the board of directors; while the president being a democrat, the cashier was selected from the federalists.¹

¹ This happy spirit of conciliation was imitated in the management of the high-schools, the water-works and the library, and might with profit have been followed still further.

Messrs. Hulbert and Larned, the two directors first named, were not specially distinguished for business-talent, but they were leaders on opposite sides in politics, and were both high-spirited, genial gentlemen, ambitious and popular. The other members of the board, resident in the county, were among its most thorough, systematic and capable business men; but none of them had any practical knowledge of banking. For this they relied upon Mr. Dexter. This person was still a young man, but was in the flush of his fame as a successful financier; and his brother-directors placed in him the most implicit confidence; a confidence which led to their ruin. Mr. Dexter was engaged in operations gigantic for that period: among others, the building of the Boston Exchange, which required the expenditure of large sums of money. To procure this, he became connected with several country-banks, which he dextrously made to contribute largely to his necessities. The methods by which this was effected seem to have been among those cases in which illegal irregularities become so common as to be condoned by public opinion until the inevitable ruin excites public indignation.

But, perhaps, in the case of the Berkshire bank, something stronger may be said. Mr. Dexter was carrying on a business in Boston, which required a deposit of a certain amount of money in bank-bills. In order to meet this obligation, he made an arrangement with the Berkshire bank by which he received two hundred thousand dollars in their bills, with the agreement that they should be kept in the original packages, and not put in circulation. They were merely to be held to satisfy the requisition of the law in regard to private bankers. In making this deposit with Mr. Dexter, the directors clearly violated the provisions of their charter, however innocent their intentions may have been; and they suffered the consequences.

In the year 1809, the bills of the bank, like those of many others, began to be discredited; and were returned for redemption in such amounts that the institution was seriously embarrassed. Finally, so hard was the run upon it that, in one day, more of its bills were placed in the hands of John Chandler Williams for collection, than appeared from its books to be in circulation.

In February, 1810, the legislature appointed a committee to investigate its affairs, together with those of the Northampton bank, which was involved in similar trouble. Their report was

somewhat confused; but it clearly says that "there is a considerable demand for Berkshire bank-bills, which the directors state are fully secured; but, of the probable payment of these bills it is difficult to judge."

The directors did indeed fully believe that their bank was perfectly secured. That much of confidence in Andrew Dexter, Jr., they still retained. But it appeared, on examination, that his property was entirely absorbed by mortgages prior to theirs: and the crash could no longer be postponed. Col. Larned, writing to Dr. Timothy Childs, shortly after the report was submitted to the legislature, says:

Under all the circumstances, I cannot say but that it was as favorable as we could reasonably expect; but it will not appear too much so without explanation. We should be willing to have the report lie over to next session. We do not hesitate to acknowledge that, by placing too high confidence in A. D., we are bankrupt to a considerable amount; but we are making an attempt to compromise at twenty-five cents on the dollar, which will take nearly or quite all our several properties: though, could the report be suffered to remain on the table until next session, we should by that time have so far proceeded in our attempt at compromise as would bring the issue within the reach of probable conjecture.

The matter was practically postponed in the legislature for one year; but the charter of the bank was finally vacated, and, the directors being personally responsible, their property was seized for the payment of its debts. This not proving sufficient, in accordance with the custom of the day in regard to imprisonment for debt, all the Berkshire directors were committed to jail at Lenox. When they were liberated, six gentlemen who, a few years before, were accounted among the most prosperous in Berkshire, returned to their homes pecuniarily ruined.

Most of them, however, afterwards recovered their prosperity; and the loss of fortune does not seem to have in the least diminished their influence or the respect in which they were previously held. An attempt was made to obtain the removal of Col. Larned from his office of Sheriff, but it miserably failed, and he held the position until he was appointed to a command in the army. Mr. Hulbert was, soon after, elected to congress against unusual odds, although the *Sun* cited his connection with the Berkshire bank against him.

The neat little banking-house built for the Berkshire bank in 1806, afterwards harbored more successful financial institutions—the Agricultural bank and then the Berkshire Mutual Fire Insurance company. It was removed in 1874, to give place to the Berkshire Athenæum.

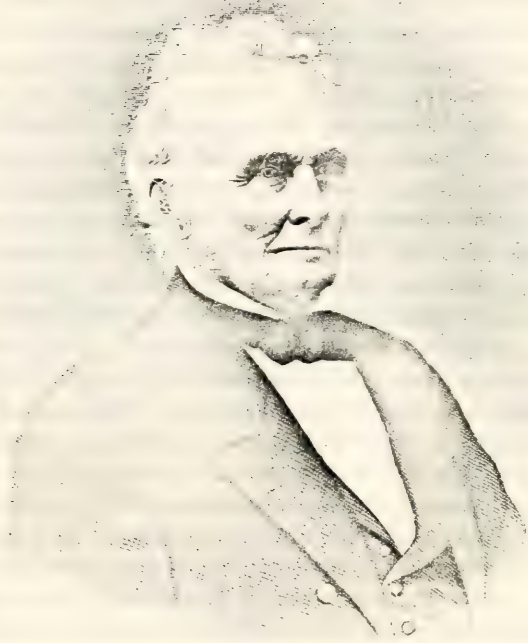
Ebenezer Center, the cashier of the bank, was a merchant doing business on Bank row. He afterwards removed to Hudson, but before his death, he returned to Pittsfield. He was an upright and excellent man, with many popular qualities, but was unsuccessful in business.

James Buel, clerk and teller of the bank, was born at Litchfield, Connecticut, in 1787, and removed to Pittsfield in 1807 or 1808. From 1810 to 1812, he resided in Hudson, N. Y. In 1812, he began business again in Pittsfield, with David Campbell, on Exchange row, as successors to S. D. and J. D. Colt. From 1814 to 1816, he was treasurer and general agent of the Pittsfield Cotton and Woollen Manufacturing company. He afterwards spent some years in New Orleans and Connecticut, but returning to Pittsfield, entered into partnership with Ezekiel R. Colt, with whom he continued in business on Bank row, for twenty-five years. He was commissioned notary public by Governor Brooks in the year 1820, and held the office by successive re-appointments until 1870. Pittsfield never had a citizen of more perfect uprightness, and scrupulous integrity, than James Buel.

The affair of the Berkshire bank was not the only one in which large sums were abstracted from the capital of Pittsfield by wrongdoing abroad. In June, 1806, Thompson J. Skinner, of Williamstown, who had represented the Berkshire district in congress, from 1797 to 1799, was chosen treasurer and receiver-general of the commonwealth; and among his bondsmen for the sum of one hundred thousand dollars, were Ezekiel Bacon, Dr. Timothy Childs, Simeon Griswold, and perhaps other citizens of Pittsfield.

At the close of Mr. Skinner's first term, the usual committee to examine the accounts of the treasurer were prevented from reporting by an early adjournment of the legislature, and a second committee appointed nine months later reported them all correct; although afterwards, in the course of legal proceedings, it appeared that they had made no personal examination of the funds in the treasury.

In June, 1809, however, it was discovered—a new treasurer



Engr. by E. Hall & Co. New York

James Bull

having been elected—that Mr. Skinner was a defaulter to the amount of sixty thousand dollars, while the assets to be obtained from his estate were only twenty thousand. The deficit of forty thousand dollars, his bondsmen were called upon to pay; and, refusing, were sued for that amount. They defended on the ground that the treasurer was solely the servant of the state-government, and in nowise amenable to his sureties, who had no means of bringing him to account; but that this was the duty of the legislature, by whose neglect to perform it at the usual and proper time, and by the false statements of whose committee, the fraud was concealed until Skinner was able to convey and actually did convey, a large portion of his property out of the state, thereby greatly increasing the burden imposed upon the bondsmen. This apparently just plea was rejected by the courts, and afterwards by the legislature, to which body application was made for relief in equity. Executions were issued against each of the sureties for the sum of ten thousand dollars, and they were put in force in the year 1812. Several other citizens of Pittsfield suffered in smaller amounts as endorsers of Skinner's private paper.

Drains like these upon the resources of the most enterprising and public-spirited citizens—small as the amounts absolutely involved may now appear—could not fail to have a sensible effect upon the material progress of the town; and some valuable citizens were led by them to seek their fortunes elsewhere.

There would seem to have been at all times an abundance of hotels in Pittsfield; and in the earliest years of the nineteenth century, the section about the park seems to have been particularly well supplied. Captain Campbell's coffee-house on Bank row, was a handsome and commodious tavern. The gambrel-roofed inn on the corner of North and West streets, was popular under the charge of Captain Joseph Merrick. Captain Merrick's popularity as a landlord was even so great that the democrats were accustomed to hold their public dinners with him, although he was known to be a moderate federalist.

In the year 1808, however, political feeling had grown so warm that it was alleged that Captain Merrick had refused to furnish the usual Fourth of July dinner for the democrats. Great indignation ensued, and the excluded party celebrated the Fourth with more spirit than even they had ever before exhibited; "although the morning was threatening, and the latter part of the day

extremely inclement." The latter circumstance decidedly marred the festivities; for the dinner being prepared by Captain Jared Ingersoll, the elder, who had ceased to keep a public house, was spread in his orchard,¹ within a rustic bower, which had been handsomely constructed with evergreen boughs and beautifully decorated with flags, mottoes and flowers. It was extremely pretty and very romantic; but it was unhappily but ill-adapted to the protection of the guests from the torrents of rain which fell while they honored "with fervor and unanimity" seventeen patriotic toasts each followed by the booming of cannon.

The result of this experience was a determination which, formed under such circumstances, was not likely to fail, that the republicans of Pittsfield would no longer depend upon federalists for a place for their patriotic festivities.² For this purpose substantial members of the party contributed freely; and in October, 1808, Rev. Thomas Allen sold to them a piece of land on the south-west corner of his home-lot, with a front of eighty-two feet on East street, and twenty rods deep. The price was sixteen hundred dollars, and the property was conveyed in four hundred and forty-five undivided parts, of which individuals held from one to five each. The following are the names of the purchasers: Simon Larned, Joshua Danforth, Ezekiel Bacon, John B. Root, Jared Ingersoll, Phineas Allen, Simeon Brown, Oramel Fanning, Septemius Bingham, James Brown, Timothy Childs, John Dickinson, Henry H. Childs, Charles Bishop, Robert Merriam, John Chamberlain, Seth Montague, Daniel Sackett, Oren Goodrich, James Root, Joel Stevens, William Stevens, Timothy Hurlbut, Simeon Butler, John Eells, David Pierson, Jr., William Francis, Jr., Oliver Root, Jesse Goodrich, Seth Moore, Elijah Bagg, Horace Allen, Eldad Francis, Joshua Baker, Oswald Williams, Samuel Williams, James Hubbard, Richard Robbins, William D. Robbins, Elijah Robbins, Jonathan Yale Clark, John Churchill, 2d, Silvester Robbins, James Hubbard, Jr., Robert

¹This orchard covered the space west of North street between Railroad street and Depot street.

²"Our friends can have no cause of present or future regret, that the doors of public houses of entertainment where they usually resorted on similar occasions have this year been closed upon them; and they trust that before another anniversary of this joyful day returns, they shall have provided themselves with more lasting habitations than they have hitherto relied upon."—Report of celebration, in the *Sun*.

Francis, Ichabod Chapman, Stephen Hurlbut, Josiah Francis, Jr., Thomas Stockin, Amasa Jeffords, Daniel Stearns, Simon Langworthy, William Janes, Ethan Janes, Silvester Langworthy, Avery Welch, Alpheus Weller, Enoch Weller, Constant Luce, William Griswold, Uriah Lathrop, Linus Parker, Tertullus Hubby, David Bush, Royal Millard, Gideon Gunn, William Brattle, Appleton Tracy, Joseph Shearer, James Moseley, Zebulon Herrick, Ludowick Stanton, Oliver P. Dickinson, Simeon Griswold, Elias Keeler, Hosea Merrill, Sr., Robert Stanton.¹

The *Sun* was disappointed in its expectation that before the fourth of July, 1809, its party would be provided with a hotel of its own; and that year the democrats dined at a small tavern kept by William Clark on East street, nearly opposite the head of Pomeroy avenue. But, the next summer "The Pittsfield Hotel," built by the above-named democratic gentlemen, was opened by Simeon Griswold. It was a large three-story building, and in his advertisement, Mr. Griswold justly boasted that it had as airy and convenient rooms as any country-hotel in New England. He further stated that it was "supplied with most of the principal American newspapers of all political parties;" and that "no exertions would be spared to render the stock of liquors of the very best quality."

The Pittsfield Hotel was really a superior house for that day, and Mr. Griswold intimated that he relied for its support rather upon general than partisan patronage. It was, however, chiefly resorted to by democrats. In the war of 1812, the officers and soldiers of the Cantonment flocked to it, while the British officers on parole took their ease, and their wine, at Captain Campbell's coffee-house. When the "era of good-will" put an end to the partisan-divisions of the town, the Pittsfield Hotel felt the effect of an excess of hotel accommodations—as the Union church did of religious—and it maintained a languishing existence until 1822, when it was sold to the trustees of the medical college.

Between the years 1800 and 1812, the appearance of Park

¹The lot thus purchased is now a portion of the grounds attached to the residence of Hon. Thomas Allen, and lies in the angle formed by East and School streets. Upon it stood the gambrel-roof cottage, occupied by Phineas Allen as a dwelling-house. The office of the *Sun* had been removed in 1807, to "Mr. Griswold's elegant new building on the corner west of the meeting-house."

square had been greatly changed, although it was still an open, ungraded space, through which roads dividing at the head of East street ran to West street, and to the corner of North street. The old Elm had but a single companion, which stood in the south-east corner of the square. When the first soldiers for the war of 1812 entered Pittsfield, they found a moderately-compact central village with a brisk country-business. The north side of the square, in addition to the church and the town-house, had on the corner of North street, the "elegant store" built by Simeon Griswold: a plain wooden structure which long held its place; being occupied by Josiah Bissell & Son, and by John C. West and Brother. The Pittsfield Hotel had taken the place of the printing-office on the east side. On the south, next to the grounds of John Chandler Williams, stood the Female Academy. Then came the Berkshire bank building, the "bookstore" of J. and R. Warriner, and the "medicine-store" of Henry James & Co., Captain Campbell's coffee-house and the two-story (Stoddard) store occupied by Nathan Willis and son. David Campbell and James Buel had succeeded J. D. and S. D. Colt, in the store built by them on the west side of the square. North of this, on the south corner of West street, still stood the gambrel-roof cottage owned by John W. Hulbert who had collected upon the premises materials for a handsome stone-mansion, when the failure of the Berkshire bank dissipated this, with many another pleasant Pittsfield hope. North of West street, stood Captain Merrick's inn, and the Bush building, with its two tenements occupied respectively by a shoemaker and a goldsmith.

It will thus be seen that the four sides of Park square were pretty closely surrounded with buildings chiefly devoted to business-purposes. But the business of the town was far from being confined to Park square. Colonel Danforth still continued his store on East street, and John B. Root and James McKnight occupied that built by Colonel Larned. Elder Robert Green having recently purchased the stock of Ahab Jinks, kept quite an extensive assortment on Elm street, as Horace Allen did on West street.

Early in 1809, Abner Stevens removed the drum-making business, which he had for some years carried on at Hancock, to Pittsfield, where he built a shop on North street, between Fenn street and the Boston and Albany railroad. Under the militia-laws,

which then existed in all the states, every town had at least one military company; and the most essential of all its equipments was the drum. The captain's sword or the private's musket might be supplied by some imperfect substitute; but a drum, and a passably good one, could not be dispensed with. Mr. Stevens made a good rattling instrument, and his business could not but thrive. The war added the national government to the number of his patrons; and, being industrious and economical, he made a handsome fortune. Under the perpetual incitement of the martial music of his own manufacture, he was of course an ardent war-democrat.

Another valuable accession to the ranks of the democrats, was Jonathan Allen, 2d. This gentleman was born at Northampton, September 26, 1786; his father being Elisha Allen. In 1801, at the age of fifteen, he walked from Northampton to Pittsfield, where he learned the clothier's business as an apprentice of Deacon Eli Maynard, with whom he entered into partnership, on attaining his majority, in 1807. Deacon Maynard retired in 1810, and the firm became Allen and (Roswell) Knight. Mr. Knight left the firm in 1811; after which, Mr. Allen carrying on the business alone, accumulated a competent fortune. In 1812, he married Clarissa Arms, of Conway. Mr. Allen, besides being a good business man, possessed some literary taste and was a good writer. Many of the best articles contributed to the *Sun* in its first half century were from his pen. He held many town-offices, and was active in town-affairs as well as in national politics. He died October 17, 1866.

Before 1812, there had grown up in Pittsfield, a manufactory of muskets, which, although not so extensive as it afterwards became, was of essential service in supplying some of the states with arms. In 1806, Jason Mills, from Springfield, purchased the old Whitney forge, and established upon the site a small gun-shop for the manufacture principally of fowling-pieces and other custom-work, for the neighboring country. In 1808, Lemuel Pomeroy purchased the place, of the representatives of Mills, and extended the works to the manufacture of muskets, for which he had contracts with Massachusetts and other states. The extent of the production was about two thousand stand annually.

In 1816, Mr. Pomeroy obtained a contract for supplying the United States government with two thousand stand annually for

a term of five years. This contract was renewed for terms of five years, until 1846, although the amount of production was reduced in 1839, to fifteen hundred stand, but of a more expensive quality. In addition to the muskets made for the government, Mr. Pomeroy supplied two hundred stand annually to the trade.

In 1846, the government introducing the percussion-musket, the manufacture of which would have required changes in Mr. Pomeroy's works costing twenty-five thousand dollars, he declined any further contract. He would, however, have made the necessary expenditure, and continued the business, if it had not been that the government about the same time placed the armory at Springfield, which had previously been conducted by civilians, in charge of the war-department, who subjected it to strict military rule. Mr. Pomeroy was satisfied that this course would render the national armory so efficient as to place private competition out of the question. This opinion Mr. Pomeroy expressed to the board who had the question of the change under consideration, and it had great influence upon their decision. The officials were greatly astonished that Mr. Pomeroy should give evidence so detrimental to his own pecuniary interest; but they did not know the man.

While the business was in the full tide of success in 1823, Mr. Pomeroy erected, for its better prosecution, a brick-building fifty feet by forty in size; and in 1828, he added a brick trip-hammer shop; these were called the water-shops, the machinery being driven by the water-power since used by the Taconic factory. The muskets were finished at a wooden-shop, two stories in height, on the corner of East street and Pomeroy avenue. In 1846, the brick water-shop was burned, and Mr. Pomeroy abandoned the manufacture of muskets; but for about ten years longer the trip-hammer shop was used for the manufacture of iron-axes.

The armory, which employed about thirty gunsmiths, was very profitable from the first, both to its proprietor and the town. From it Mr. Pomeroy obtained a portion of those resources, which under adverse circumstances, enabled him to lay the foundations of his woolen-manufactures. The trade of the gunsmith was hereditary in the Pomeroy family; the muskets manufactured by Mr. Pomeroy's grandfather, General Seth Pomeroy, having been famous throughout New England and the Canadas in the French and Indian wars. Those manufactured by the grandson were

even more extensively scattered, having been distributed by the general government to the several states. One of them—a genuine old flint-lock of the date of 1825—was picked up by a Massachusetts officer on the battle-field of Newbern, N. C., and sent as a relic to Rev. Dr. Todd, by whom it was presented to the historical cabinet of the Berkshire Athenæum.

Among the most important events in the years immediately preceding the war of 1812, was the installation of Rev. William Allen, in the place of his father, as pastor of the First church, which occurred October 10, 1810. The story of Mr. Allen's pastorate is told in another chapter. To the citizens of the town he was the democratic minister; and he acted, indeed, as a sort of chaplain to the party on all occasions when the presence of a clergyman was decorous and desirable. He inherited from his father a firm faith in democratic principles and a true love for the party and its leaders; but his tastes were rather scholarly and literary, than political. The dissensions in the church were painful to him as a Christian minister; and when the feelings excited by the contest in which he was the champion of a father disabled by ill-health, had subsided, his partisanship was not very pronounced. His Biographical Dictionary, the first edition of which, published in 1809, was a work of much original research—although inferior to that of 1832—had made him many friends in all parts of the country, and among all classes of intelligent citizens. And he doubtless longed for the quiet to pursue similar work. His peculiar notions as to requiring a strict compliance with the letter of the law, led him, however, to an enforcement of church-discipline, in a manner which might wisely have been tempered, and which made him many enemies. And a similar unyielding temperament, or judgment, followed him with disastrous results through a great part of his active life, especially in his relations with Dartmouth and Bowdoin colleges.

CHAPTER X.

WAR OF 1812—CANTONMENT AND DEPOT FOR PRISONERS OF WAR.

[1811-1815.]

Politics and political influences in Pittsfield—Names of prominent politicians—News of declaration of war received, and its effect—The Cantonment established—Barracks erected—Troops arrive—Dinners for the soldiers—Social intercourse and officers' balls—Recruiting and drilling—Major Melville as organizer and manager of the post—Slanders against him met and refuted—The 9th and other regiments called to the front—The Cantonment a depot for prisoners of war—Major Melville as agent for prisoners and deputy marshal—Escape of prisoners attributed to federalists—Stables converted into prisons—Incidents—Unruly prisoners—Prisoners released at close of the war and unwilling return to Canada—Berkshire regiments in the war—Pittsfield officers—Dinner to General Ripley.

THE act of congress, approved by President Madison, June 18, 1812, declaring that the long impending war with Great Britain had come, was printed in the *Pittsfield Sun*, June 27, together with the president's message, upon which the declaration was based. The news was received by the democratic majority with joy; while the federalists, after a brief hesitation on the part of some, joined their voice with that of their brethren at the East, in denouncing the war, as needless, and fraught with all manner of evils and dangers to the people, both from their own government, and the enemy. It was a signal for yet another increase of virulence in the political feuds of the day.

The grounds upon which a majority of the people of New England, especially of the more wealthy and conservative classes, began early to hate the administrations of Jefferson and Madison, have been considered. In the years immediately preceding the declaration of war, they had rapidly multiplied, and become more definite. A sense of personal wrong and injury succeeded to the vague fears arising from dangerous theories of government. The evil which they feared, had come upon them. The embargo and non-importation acts, with the irritating and vexatious supple-

mentary laws by which government sought to enforce them, seemed to the importers of Massachusetts and Connecticut—who saw them enforced through favoritism, sometimes with needless severity, and sometimes with scandalous laxity—to be the very essence of tyranny. It was not now so much that government favored France against Great Britain. The new laws seemed aimed less against Old England, than at the very life of New England; for trade, navigation and fisheries were to her, the source of all prosperous life.

“You take my life

When you do take the means by which I live.”

All Massachusetts, especially from the eastern slope of the Hoosac mountains to the sea, drew the breath of life through the ports of Boston and Salem; and to the majority of its people, the acts restricting navigation and commerce seemed but another Boston port-bill, quite as malignant as the first, and more comprehensive. Their opinion of the radical tendencies of Jeffersonian democracy was more than confirmed by the effect of democratic measures upon their fortunes. Twice, indeed, in the fourteen years next following the election of Mr. Jefferson to the presidency, the state elected democratic governors; but in both instances it was due to temporary and exceptional causes, which indicated no radical change of political sentiment. For the rest, the federal majorities had varied from 1,000 to 14,000—rarely falling below 3,000—in a total vote of from 100,000 to 104,000.

Berkshire continued to show the result of her mountain isolation from the rest of the state; uniformly, from 1801 to 1815, choosing democratic members of congress; and state-senators of the same political complexion, except in a single year, when a different result was secured by throwing out the votes of two democratic towns, for informality. The territorial position of the county, acting upon a basis of character derived from the Puritans, had made its people in an unusual degree, independent thinkers: independent, at least, of almost all external influence; however biased by traditional prejudice and well-preserved feuds.

All assertions of this sort of independence, must nevertheless, be qualified; and perhaps the best that can be claimed for the people of Berkshire, in this regard, is that their peculiar freedom from the intellectual authority of their state-capital, enabled them to judge with more candor of the arguments and reasonings which

reached them from other sources. For, as to the most self-contained man—the most repellent of intruded counsels: so to the most secluded people—the most jealous of teachers claiming authority—influences from without will come, and must, whether consciously or otherwise, be entertained.

And, of these influences, however little the people of Berkshire, as a mass, were inclined to be submissive to the opinions of their metropolis, no small portion were received from the town of Boston. It was impossible that, every year, some of the most active minds of the county—some with liberal culture, and nearly all with abundance of shrewd common sense—should pass weeks among the people of Boston, and some of them in its most attractive social circles, without a very considerable effect upon their personal feelings, as well as upon their views of the measures which were the ordinary topics of conversation. It would be a too curious question fully to consider here, what the effect of these influences was upon different classes of minds; but it is certain that, as a rule, the federalists returned, charmed by the social fascinations of their metropolitan compatriots into a new devotion to the party of whose leaders they had found so pleasant an experience; and that the democrats were nerved by their legislative combats for sterner conflicts at home.

The legislature is always a valuable school, and a medium which can hardly be too highly prized for the diffusion of the culture of the capital throughout the most secluded districts of the state; and it was so especially when intercommunication between city and country was as restricted as it was in the earlier years of the nineteenth century. Many were the respectable gentlemen in Berkshire who marked with white, and perpetually recurred to, the year when they were chosen to the legislature; and with reason, for it probably added twofold to their intellectual ability.

But, considerable as the influence of Boston upon Berkshire opinion was, it was nevertheless not a preponderating power. It was more than counterbalanced by that which arose from the intimate business-relations between the county and the states of New York and Connecticut. Even the federalists drew their inspiration quite as much from Hartford as from Boston.¹

¹Perhaps less from either than from the old county of Hampshire, of which several of the leading Pittsfield federalists were natives.

A more definite and decided influence came, though Rev. Messrs. Allen and Leland, from the leading intellects of the democratic party in the nation. From the era of 1776, Mr. Allen, until his death, followed Thomas Jefferson, as the great apostle of liberty; and taught men so. Elder Leland, early familiar with the mighty men of his party, in Virginia, and renewing his intercourse with them by repeated visits to the Old Dominion, communicated their spirit in its freshness, as he passed from house to house; and what was thus told and taught, became a mighty power—a power which is felt to this day.

In combining the influences named, and bringing them practically to bear upon the politics of the day, each party had in Berkshire, able leaders. Of those resident in Pittsfield, we may name as active and prominent on the federal side, Woodbridge Little and Capt. Charles Goodrich, who were still active combatants, although of a previous generation; John W. Hulbert, John Chandler Williams, Thomas Gold, Deacon Charles Goodrich, Joseph Merrick and Dr. Daniel James. Among the active young politicians on the federal side, were Lemuel Pomeroy, Theodore Hinsdale, Jr., James D. Colt, Butler Goodrich, David Campbell, the Warriners, Jason Clapp, Joseph Bissell and James Buel.

Among the democratic leaders in chief, were Ezekiel Bacon, Simon Larned, Jonathan Allen, 1st and 2d, Dr. Timothy and Dr. H. H. Childs, John B. Root, Capt. John Dickinson, Phineas Allen, Elkanah Watson, and Joseph Shearer.

The democrats had also a reserve corps of men, who, although not professed politicians, took a decided and constant interest in political affairs; and a stern, hard-working phalanx it was, always to be relied upon, whatever the emergency and whatever the obstacle to be met. Neither storms nor the imperious calls of private business, ever kept them from the polls. Jackson might have learned from them his famous watchword, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." Among them were to be counted all the influential farmers of the West Part, Oliver Root, Joel Stevens—pronounced by Major Melville "the best farmer in Berkshire county"—William Francis, Josiah Francis, and the long list which bore the honored name of Francis, the Churchills, Hubbards, Parkers, Jesse Goodrich, and indeed almost all the names which appear in the roll of the West Part militia.

So in other parts of the town; at the east, the Bushes, Gunns,

Fairfields, Footes, Nobles and Herricks; at the north, the Merrills; in the center, the Ingersolls, the Hollisters, Oramel Fanning, William Clark, Simeon Griswold, and others.¹

In the ability of their leaders, the two parties in Pittsfield were nearly equal. The democrats owed their great preponderance at the polls, in part to the sturdy and unwavering phalanx, of which we have just given a few names, and in part to traditionary opinions. But they were greatly indebted, also, to circumstances then recent; and which continued to increase in power, through the war.

And, first, manufactures had, during the preceding twelve or fifteen years been assuming a new importance in the business of the town, and, still more, in the esteem of its citizens; creating among them interests diverse from those of the rest of the state. East of the mountains, manufacturers were either so trifling in extent as to be completely overshadowed by the greater concerns of commerce, or their productions were of a class which looked chiefly to a foreign market; while agriculture found its customers either in the same distant trade, or among those who were engaged in carrying it on.

But Pittsfield had already become, to a good degree, a manufacturing town; not, indeed, so much in what had already been accomplished—although that was considerable, and of a promising character—as in the spirit which had been infused into its people by its newspapers, and by public-spirited men like Elkanah Watson, and his associates in the Berkshire Agricultural Society. The comparison must be made, not between the absolute amounts of manufacturing capital in the two sections, but with regard to its proportion to that otherwise invested, and also with an eye to the connection of the several classes of business-occupations with each other.

In Pittsfield, many of the well-to-do citizens were directly interested in the manufacture of woollen-goods for home-consumption. Each political party—or members of each—had its factory. There was quite an extensive manufactory of looms, spinning-jennies and carding-machines. The farmers were introducing large flocks of merino sheep, and they looked to the

¹It is obviously impossible to make lists like the above full. The reader will himself add to it from the names of the proprietors of the Pittsfield Hotel, and others mentioned in this volume.

success of the mills to furnish a profitable market for the wools which they were zealously endeavoring to improve, and for their other farm-products. All classes were looking to the new manufactures as the most promising source of the future prosperity and wealth of the town, as well as the nation ; and it was easy to see that a war, acting in the nature of a stringent protective tariff—as a war with Great Britain especially would—must greatly encourage them. On the other hand, among the most effective arguments which Mr. Watson used in his advocacy of Berkshire manufactures and improved wools, was the necessity for the country to supply itself with the better class of fabrics from its own looms in the event of a war, which, without any startling manifestation of the spirit of prophecy, he was able to predict as one of the events of the near future. The love of country and the hope of gain thus operated reciprocally upon each other, and harmoniously together, in the encouragement of manufactures. It thus happened, also, that there were not the same economical reasons which prevailed in the eastern part of the state, to restrain resentment for the insults and injuries of Great Britain. Here whatever opposition to the war there was, arose from party affiliations and prejudices, or personal opinions regarding its justice, or its expediency as affecting the whole country. In fact, the war promised to be, and was, most favorable to some of the citizens of Pittsfield who most bitterly denounced it. It furnished the best customer to Lemuel Pomeroy's gun-factory. It was full of promise to those federalists who, like Mr. Pomeroy, James D. and S. D. Colt, David Campbell and James Buel, were just embarking in the manufacture of cloths. It was certainly not private interest which dictated their political course.

But, irrespective of personal interests, there was much to provoke a wide difference of political feeling and opinion. It was far easier for either party to find an excuse for much of its own action in the errors and mistakes—national and state—of its opponents, than to defend it by sound reasoning upon any principle of abstract right.

From a New England point of view, the measures of government which led to the war were liable to the severest criticism ; and of its partisanship for France no one now doubts, although no one now imagines that it was of a corrupt character. The puerile jealousy of a regular army and navy which characterized

the administration of Jefferson, and the ludicrous expedients by which it sought to defend the country without them, were fair subjects for sneers. Even the absurd underestimate of the expenses of the first year of the war, submitted by Ezekiel Bacon, as chairman of the committee of ways and means in the house of representatives, must be given up as one of the rare instances in which that gentleman allowed the necessities of party to overcome his own good judgment.

It was apparent enough that those who brought on the war were strangely negligent of preparations for it. There is great truth in the assertion of Mr. Hillard, the federal historian of the period, that "never was an unfortunate country precipitated into an unequal and perilous contest, under circumstances more untoward."

But the federalists, on their part, made the greater mistake, when war was declared, not only of refusing it their support, but of going to the very verge of treason in their efforts to thwart the government in its measures for carrying it on; by their votes in congress, by the acts of state-legislatures in which they had control, by discouraging enlistments, and throwing ridicule upon the army and its officers. The democrats complained that, "whatever difficulty or distress arose from the extraordinary circumstances of the times, when great difficulty and distress were inevitable, was aggravated and magnified to the highest degree for the purpose of inflaming the public passions; that from the moment when the war was declared, they (the federalists) clamored for peace, and reprobated the war as wicked, unjust and unnecessary. They made every possible effort to raise obstructions and difficulties in its prosecution; and yet reprobated the administration for their imbecility in carrying it on. They reduced the government to bankruptcy, and then reproached it for its necessities and embarrassments. In a word, all their movements had but one object—to enfeeble and distract the government."¹

The indictment was a true one. Whatever may have been the impolicy of plunging into the war; however a wiser statesmanship might have led to some other course, it could hardly be disputed that the acts of Great Britain had been such as to justify a resort to arms; that, as regarded *her*, the war was just. By their efforts to impede its successful prosecution, the federalists

¹ Carey's Olive Branch.

committed the fatal error which made their name a stigma and a by-word for generations.

But, although their great leader, John Adams, his son John Quincy Adams, Samuel Dexter, and other men of note, abandoned the party on the first intimation of this policy, it was not until after the close of the war, that its effects were fully appreciated. While hostilities continued, the federal party was not, at least sensibly, weakened from what it was when they commenced.

While its issue was uncertain, while mistakes in the camp and the council offered constant themes for censure of the government; while taxation and high prices bore hard upon the people, without, in most sections, adequate compensation by increased rewards for industry; and, above all, while the heat of party-violence had no time to cool, it was easy to maintain a respectable opposition to the war; but when it closed under circumstances which threw around it a brilliant halo of glory, and with the ends for which it was undertaken substantially attained, although not definitely recognized in the treaty, the reaction came with double power, and the federal party had to sustain, not only the obloquy of its errors, but of many heinous political offenses which were far from its thoughts. Many faithless Peters, who had been among the most hot-headed of its adherents, not only denied it in its fall, but found high places in the hostile camp by maligning their old associates, who, wrapping themselves in the mantle of their pure and patriotic intentions, maintained a dignified silence.

But to return to the opening of the war in 1812, Pittsfield soon had a reason to be reconciled to it—in addition to those already mentioned—in the establishment there, of a cantonment of United States troops, followed in 1813, by a depot for prisoners of war; from both of which, as well as from the purchase of general supplies for the army, there resulted a large expenditure of money in the town and county, with a profit to the people which would have been welcome at any time, but which was specially grateful after their recent losses.

On the passage of the act of January, 1812, for raising 25,000 additional United States troops, a general rendezvous for recruits was established at Pittsfield, Captain A. J. Bucklin of Cheshire, being placed in command. During the first ten days, thirty men were enlisted, and Lieut. Jared Ingersoll was stationed at Sheffield, Lieut. David Perry at Adams, and Ensign Wm. Browning at

Pittsfield; all being of Pittsfield and recruiting for the ninth regiment. Lieut. Ralph B. Cuyler was also stationed at Pittsfield, beating up for the 6th regiment.

On the 25th of April, the advertisements of these officers, in the *Pittsfield Sun*, began to call upon "all true and patriotic Americans, who were determined to vindicate the rights and maintain the independence of their country," "to rally to the standards" of their respective regiments; and the recruiting sergeants began to penetrate into every town in the county.

On the 23d of May, Rev. Wm. Allen deeded to the United States, for \$800, one acre of land on the east side of North street, next above the present location of the Boston and Albany railroad. Upon this site stood the gambrel-roofed cottage, so often mentioned in previous chapters, which had been removed from East street to give place to the Pittsfield Hotel. This was now fitted up as a residence for the commandant of the post, and continued to be occupied for that purpose until Pittsfield ceased to be a military station.

On the 30th of May, the town was honored by a visit from the revolutionary veteran, Henry Dearborn, who had, in the previous February, been commissioned senior major-general of the United States army. General Dearborn was received by a national salute, and visited by many of the prominent citizens. He left, the next morning, for Springfield; but, short as his visit was, it resulted in the purchase of thirteen acres of level ground about one hundred rods north of the Park—which were subsequently increased to twenty-six acres and ninety-three rods.¹

¹ The Cantonment grounds covered the land since occupied by Maplewood Young Ladies' Institute, St. Joseph's church and pastor's residence, and also about seven acres east of First street. There are some facts concerning the purchase not perfectly explained. It is stated in the *Sun*, of June 20, 1812, that government had purchased fourteen acres of land, and there is no doubt that it was correct in stating that buildings for the Cantonment had been commenced. But the land was part of the estate of Rev. Thomas Allen, and the probate court did not grant a license to sell it until June, 1814, soon after which date it was advertised, and sold at public auction, as required by law, the United States being the highest bidder. The other estate advertised with it, was the remainder of the home-lot, a few shares in the Hotel and the Female Academy, and the "meadow lot" on Wahconah street; and so much was to be sold as would raise the sum of \$5,400, for the payment of debts and legacies. The executor's deed of the first thirteen acres is dated October 25, 1814, and the price was \$1,170. The deed of the

After an interval of twenty-six years since its occupation by General Lincoln's little army in the Shays rebellion, Pittsfield now again began to assume the peculiar bustle of a military post.

The northern part of the thirteen acres purchased by General Dearborn was covered by a beautiful grove. A few rods south of the edge of this wood, on the spots since occupied by the chapel and two boarding-houses of Maplewood Young Ladies' Institute, were ranged the barracks: three plain wooden buildings, each three stories high, and one hundred and thirty feet long, with piazzas along the fronts of the different stories.

The west building was the officers' quarters; the east that of the non-commissioned officers and privates. The middle was used for various purposes. This was the arrangement for the first year. Subsequently some changes occurred, incident to the use of the Cantonment as a depot for prisoners of war. In the rear were two barns of the same length as the barracks, and two stories high; it being in contemplation to form here a regiment of cavalry.

The necessities of the service were pressing; operations on the northern frontier and in Canada were among the earliest proposed; it was hoped that troops for this purpose would be rapidly enlisted; and it was desirable to complete the buildings for their rendezvous as soon as possible. Capt. John Dickinson took the contract to have them ready in sixty days, and fulfilled it; although his health was so infirm that it was necessary for his daughter—now Mrs. C. T. Fenn—to drive with him daily in his chaise from their residence on the corner of East and Second streets, to the Cantonment grounds, in order that he might superintend the work. All the town came together at the raising of the frames, and in return for their aid enjoyed a merry and patriotic hour.

Afterwards, a plain two-story building was erected, for a hospital, in the south-west corner of the purchase of thirteen acres. And, on North street, the thrifty politician, as well as thrifty farmer, Joseph Shearer, built his sutler's shop.

seven acres and ninety-three rods, east of the first, is dated January 27, 1815, and the price \$650. [Berkshire Registry of Deeds.] It seems probable that the United States took possession of the ground under an agreement with Mr. Allen, and an understanding with the general public, whose interest it was that the government should have the land.

Before the buildings were well under way, there were received two thousand stand of arms, with a full complement of camp-kettles, uniforms and other military equipments for the northern army.

On the 24th of June, a detachment of seventy fine-looking men from Captain Harris's company of light dragoons—the advance of the regiment which it was intended to gather here—came proudly marching into town. They were not yet mounted, and had marched, in eight days, one hundred and forty miles, from Boston. After a midsummer day's tramp across the Berkshire hills, they must have been somewhat dusty and way-worn; but, before entering the village, they had a little furbishing and refreshing, and, as they marched up East and North streets, "they made an excellent appearance: of good size, young, healthy and active." The sight thrilled the hearts of all, save the most inveterate partisans of England. The democrats had been told by their newspaper of the preceding week, that these gallant youth came "for the glorious purpose of defending the rights which had too long been trampled upon with impunity;" and they welcomed them with wild delight.

The school-teachers, with due instruction as to the significance of the spectacle, released their broods, to gaze upon, and salute with their childish greetings, the gay troopers whom they looked upon as the successors of Marion's men and Harry Lee's Light-horse; for the patriotic old pastors who, in many households, had taught the fathers the political gospel of Virginian statesmen, did not fail to delight the children with stories of southern heroes. Old men, who were children then, relate with animation their emotions at the sight presented by Lieutenant Wheelock's dragoons; and, often, afterwards, when they were released from their tasks, as detachment after detachment of troops for the northern army passed through the town from the east; or large squads of prisoners, after the victories on the lakes and on the northern frontier, marched down West street. Such spectacles were frequent in the streets of Pittsfield, from that date until the returning tide of war, in 1815, brought back the victors of the Niagara frontier. But there is something which is never afterwards experienced, in the first peal of the trumpet, the first flash of serried arms in the streets, and the first array of men ready to do battle for their country, which, in each new war,

breaks the stagnation of long-accustomed peace; and the Pittsfield people of 1812 never, probably, greeted another corps with precisely the same emotions as those excited by the appearance of the light-dragoons. The peculiar nature of this branch of the service, by far the most fascinating to the imagination, and the fact that it was the only corps of the kind to be raised in Massachusetts, also added to the effect.

South of the unfinished barracks, the Cantonment grounds covered a beautiful level area of eight or nine acres, which had been Rev. Mr. Allen's meadow; and upon this the dragoons encamped—as other detachments afterwards did, from time to time, when the barracks were insufficient. Lieutenant Wheelock was complimented as an able, spirited and humane¹ officer, and the soldier-like appearance, and orderly conduct of his men, were much applauded. The troop remained at the Cantonment several months, and continued to maintain the good opinion of the citizens, with whom the soldiers mingled as freely as was consistent with good discipline, especially on occasions of patriotic rejoicing. And a brief account of one of these instances in the *Sun* confirms our belief that, however party-feeling and party-organization, stimulated and guided by extreme men, may have led the federal party to an unwarrantable opposition to the government in its conduct of the war, still the sympathies of the mass of its members were always with the national arms: "On the receipt of the news of the splendid and glorious victory of Commodore Decatur (the capture of the frigate *Macedonian*), the bells (both of the Union and the First parish) were rung, and the company of dragoons under Captain Harris assembled with the citizens, on the green (afterwards the Park), and with two pieces of artillery, fired a national salute, and *without distinction of party*, gave the officers and crew of the United States frigate three cheers." There was not much affection for Great Britain in that spontaneous outburst of feeling.

Before the arrival of the dragoons, seventy men had been enlisted for Capt. Bucklin's company in the 9th regiment of infantry. The pecuniary inducements then offered for enlistments for a term of five years were a bounty of sixteen dollars, and, at the expiration of the term of service, three months' extra

¹ He proved in active service far otherwise, as to spirit at least.

pay, and one hundred and sixty acres of the public lands, "to be designated, laid off and surveyed at the expense of the government."

Recruiting can hardly be said to have been very brisk, as on the 1st of August, the number reported in the barracks, including the seventy dragoons, which Lieutenant Wheelock brought with him from Boston, was only two hundred; but these must have thought that their lines had fallen to them in pleasant places. They were surrounded by a population, the great majority of whom looked upon them as the defenders of their most sacred rights; while, among the declared opponents of the war, there were many ready to welcome companions so genial and intelligent as most of the officers at the Cantonment proved.

The ladies, as ever in such cases, were full of patriotic enthusiasm, which manifested itself in various ways, from providing stockings and dinners for the privates, to marrying the most gallant and distinguished of the officers. In this early stage of the occupation of the town, the first exhibition of this feeling was in the old and natural mode of extending hospitality: by feasting the honored guests. And, on the 4th of July, 1812, "the bountiful hand of female benevolence spread the table of festivity and enjoyment for the soldiers, who were regaled by the republican ladies in a style which reflected honor upon their patriotism."

On the 30th of the same month, the ladies of Cheshire—Elder Leland's town, ten miles north of Pittsfield—went down, laden with a collation upon which the editor of the *Sun* dilated with evident admiration: "An elegant and sumptuous dinner, served up in the best manner by their own fair hands—under a handsome bower erected for the occasion at the encampment—and consisting of every variety of the season: beef, ham, lamb, pigs, turkeys, fowls, green-peas, string-beans, new potatoes, puddings, pies, and indeed everything requisite for an entertainment of the first order, which in truth it was." Lieutenant Wheelock presided at the table, and many of the officers of the 9th regiment were present, and tendered their acknowledgments with a pledge of "their ardent devotion to the service of their country, and an assurance of the most inviolate protection of the American fair." They could hardly have done less: and one cannot help agreeing with the editor of the *Sun*, in his opinion, "that the man who had partaken of the feast thus provided, must be an ingrate indeed,

who did not exert himself to the utmost in vindicating the rights of his insulted country ;” especially as, by way of giving a more piquant flavor to the sumptuous viands, the soldiers were informed that they were tendered as a testimony of “the respect and approbation of the ladies for the vigorous measures now pursued by our national government for the redress of the insults and injuries heaped upon their country for a long time previous, by the *eternal* enemies of liberty.”

On the 4th of August, the whig¹ ladies of Dalton gave a dinner to the officers and soldiers of the 9th regiment, which was provided for them at the tavern of William Clark, on East street. “What gave particular zest to the occasion was the appearance of the patriotic fair ones, who had prepared the entertainment and attended the tables personally.” Many of the “whig” citizens attended, and in all nearly three hundred were seated at the table, at which Simon Larned, who had been appointed colonel of the regiment, presided, assisted by Thomas Aspinwall, its major.

Nor were these public and general banquets the only occasions upon which the soldiery at the Cantonment enjoyed social intercourse with the people of the village. The officers, and some at least of the soldiers, were welcomed to the best houses ; and it need hardly be said, that none found difficulty in forming pleasant friendships. In return for these hospitalities, the officers began early, and kept up until the close of the war, a round of balls, which, if gallantry and beauty could make them so, were, beyond doubt, brilliant ; although gay calicoes were far in excess of muslins, and silks were rare indeed. But the music was good, the suppers were excellent, the dances—thanks to the teachers of the art, who were plentiful—were skillful and graceful, and all were ready to please and be pleased. After the lapse of more than sixty years, the memory of those glad hours, is still grateful to the few now living who joined in those measures, and maintain—rightly we believe—that Pittsfield has never seen balls to equal those at the old Cantonment.²

¹ The administration-party at this time preferred the name of republican, but claiming to be the successors of the revolutionary whigs, affected their name as a synonym for their own.

² Mrs. C. T. Fenn was one of the ladies at these balls. Colonel Aspinwall of the 9th, who lost an arm at Niagara, and is now the oldest graduate of Harvard college, was one of the most pleasant of the dancers.

But we must turn from the pleasures which alleviated the irksomeness of barrack-life at the Cantonment, to the details of its practical work. There was, with recruiting, drilling, and studying the manuals of military science, in which most of the officers had much to learn, an abundance of it.

The dragoons, who were soon recruited to a full troop, and mounted upon horses purchased to a considerable extent in the vicinity of Pittsfield, were daily drilled in the tactics of their branch of the service, and, often, upon the neighboring roads glimpses of their uniform and glances from their arms enlivened the beautiful scenery, while their bugles echoed among the hills.

The 9th regiment—Berkshire's own—grew apace, although not so rapidly as its officers hoped. Colonel Larned was popular, and so, in spite of his severity in drill and discipline, was Lieutenant-colonel Aspinwall. Early in September the regiment had three hundred men in the barracks, all good material for soldiers, and drilling industriously.

The Cantonment was also the rendezvous for the 6th, 21st and perhaps other regiments.

On the 1st of July, Thomas Melville, Jr., who had just returned to his father's home in Boston, after a residence of twenty-one years in France, was appointed commissary and superintendent of supplies for the army, with the rank of major.

At a later period of the war he was made United States deputy marshal and agent for prisoners of war. In fact, although sometimes outranked by regimental commanders at the station, Major Melville was the organizer and superintendent of the post; having his official residence at the gambrel-roofed cottage purchased of Rev. William Allen.

The establishment of a commissary station and a depot for prisoners of war in connection with the Cantonment, furnished a cash-market for almost every kind of surplus product which the county or the neighboring region could supply, and contributed much toward making Pittsfield a local business-center. Major Melville's advertisements, commencing June 17, 1812, with "six or seven hundred yards of yard-wide tow-cloth," called, before they ended, for every variety of cloth, for leather, iron, beef, pork, grain of all kinds, vegetables, hay, wood, wagons, horses, and whatever else the county could produce, or an army consume or use; and they were answered from a wide circuit of country.

But, beneficial as the Cantonment and station for supplies were to the people of their neighborhood, they had hardly been established before the baser sort of the opponents of the war began to impede their operations, by inventing and circulating in the surrounding towns stories of altercations among the officers, and frequent desertions by the new recruits. It was to be expected, therefore, that the coming of Major Melville would be followed by even more violent attacks; and he was, in fact, obliged to publish a card of denial, which appeared in the *Sun* of September 17, 1812, in which he says, that several malicious reports had been spread, since his residence in town, which, being of a *personal* nature only, he thought it advisable to pass unnoticed; but, attempts having been made within a few days, to propagate a report which did not permit him to remain longer silent, viz.: that he was not furnished with funds to meet the obligations of the United States government in Pittsfield, and—what was more infamous—that, in his official capacity, he had borrowed, or attempted to borrow, money of a person here, he took the first public opportunity to “publish the author as an infamous liar.”

This vigorous form of denial, which was quite in keeping with the custom of the day, proved effectual for a time. But, in the spring of 1813, the old calumnies were revived under apparently corroborating circumstances. A change occurring in the head of the quartermaster-general's department at Albany, the secretary of war directed that the payment of all debts incurred under his authority should be suspended during the adjusting of his accounts. Upon this foundation, various reports concerning the financial affairs of the station at Pittsfield—some of them gross misrepresentations, and others palpable falsehoods—were put in circulation.

Greatly disturbed by these reports, Major Melville went to Albany, and there addressed a letter to the new quartermaster-general in that city, Robert Swartwout, in which he said:

Sir: Entrusted with the creation of the military post at Pittsfield, Mass., and clothed with the confidence of the late quartermaster-general, I have been enabled to call forth the resources and energies of a considerable and interesting part of the county of Berkshire and vicinity.

Firm and undaunted in my measures, candid and open in my political sentiments, jealous for the welfare of the army and for the interests

of the government, I dare flatter myself that I have merited the approbation even of those who may differ from me in political opinion.

It is painful for me to be obliged to anticipate that the measures necessitated by the new organization of the quartermaster-general's department may paralyze, or diminish, the confidence I have labored to establish—and it grieves me to reflect that those persons who have exerted themselves, and put forth their funds for the execution of contracts, for the account of the government, should meet with even a momentary delay in the receipt of their just dues.

In conclusion, Major Melville expressed fears lest the secretary's order might lead persons unaccustomed to the forms of public business to attribute delays in payment to a want of confidence, on the part of the government, either in his own integrity or capability. In reply, General Swartwout, under date of May 8, stated that the suspension of payments was temporary, and under a general order in which the station at Pittsfield was only incidentally included. He added that he had already taken such measures as would shortly enable Major Melville to pay all dues; and added: "I am perfectly satisfied that you have diligently and faithfully discharged your duty in the various important trusts confided to you."

Major Melville published both his own letter and the reply, in the *Sun*, accompanied by a note, which closes with the following warning, alluding to the stories which had been circulated, to the detriment of the post: "Should these reports be again revived, I shall conceive it a duty to the government and to myself, to take such notice of the authors and their abettors as will not, perhaps, be agreeable to them."

We hear no more upon this subject, and probably no more palpable slanders against the post were discovered.

While the commissary and quartermaster of the post were thus prosecuting their duties for the benefit of both the town and the country, the routine-work of the Cantonment also went on well. The buildings were finished according to contract. William Hollister and Oramel Fanning took the contract for the supply of the local commissariat, and executed it satisfactorily. Their first advertisement appeared July 9, 1813, and offered a fair price, in cash, for fifty barrels of good prime pork, one hundred bushels of good rye, with beef-cattle, lambs, and calves, *ad libitum*. It was one of the daily pleasures of the village-children to watch

Mr. Hollister's great hay-cart, with its huge rack piled high with loaves of excellent bread, wending its way to the Cantonment.

Healthful as the location of the barracks was, changed habits of life, and unaccustomed diet, gave hospital-work; and death sometimes anticipated the harvest of the battle-field. In this connection, a new excitement arose. Pittsfield was not yet the seat of a medical college; but it was not without ambitious young doctors, and Joseph Childs, a soldier in Captain Grafton's company of infantry, being interred in the town burial-ground, some evil-disposed persons, not having a due sense of the sacred rights of Christian burial, on the night of the 20th of September, disinterred his body and carried it away for dissection. Colonel John L. Tuttle, commanding the Cantonment, offered a reward of fifty dollars for the detection of the resurrectionist; but although there was little doubt of his identity, no legal proof against him could be obtained. The excitement died away; but, it being revived by a similar occurrence, a guard was at first stationed over the graves, and afterwards, a plot in the Cantonment grounds was set apart for burial purposes.

Among the camp-followers which the Cantonment brought to Pittsfield, was the first elephant which ever crossed the Berkshire hills. It was exhibited, on the 6th and 7th of October—the 6th being cattle-show—in the open space east of Captain Campbell's coffee-house on Bank row. The advertisements headed "Now or never," informed the people that that generation might never again have an opportunity of seeing an elephant; as this was the only one in America, and this might be its last visit to Pittsfield. "The elephant," it was further explained, "is not only the largest and most sagacious animal in the world, but from the peculiar manner in which it takes its food and drink, with its trunk, is acknowledged to be the greatest natural curiosity ever offered to the public."

Troops, by companies, or in detachments of recruits, continued to arrive from the east, and—after longer or shorter intervals, varying from a single day to several weeks, as rest, re-organization, drill, or other exigencies of the service required—to move on towards the seat of war.

About the first of September, news of General Hull's disastrous surrender at Detroit spread gloom over the little camp. But the *Sun*, in announcing the misfortune, was able to lighten the picture

by printing, side by side with it, the news of the brilliant affair of the Constitution and Guerriere. The glory of one Hull relieved the disgrace of the other; which was not the only time in that year when naval victories came opportunely to mitigate the sting of defeats on land.

The capture of Hull's army leaving the northern frontier exposed, all the available forces in the department were hurried to the front; and although the 9th regiment had only three hundred and fifty men, it went with the rest; Colonel Larned going in command, but Major Aspinwall remaining in charge of the recruiting-service for western Massachusetts.

One entire company of the 9th regiment, and a portion of the others, were raised in Berkshire. All had, by their good conduct, won the esteem of the citizens of Pittsfield; and they left the Cantonment, already a favorite corps. They marched, on the 4th of September, "well armed and uniformed, and provided with every necessary supply for a campaign; both officers and men in high spirits." A number of Pittsfield gentlemen escorted them as far as Lanesboro, where they were met by a delegation from New Ashford, in which town the patriotic citizens spread for them a plentiful entertainment. Reaching Williamstown at evening, they were again furnished, "by its republican citizens," with every necessary refreshment. The next morning, they proceeded by way of Vermont, to Lake Champlain.

About two weeks later, Lieutenant-Colonel Ripley, of the 21st regiment, who had reached Pittsfield in August, with a hundred and fifty recruits from Portland, Maine, followed Colonel Larned to Whitehall, with two hundred and twenty men for the 9th and 21st regiments. Captain Harris's dragoons remained until December 28.

Early in December, the northern army were ordered into winter-quarters; and it was so confidently expected that the 9th and 21st regiments would return to Pittsfield, that the *Sun*, of December 3d, announced that they might be expected in ten days. The whole army, however, wintered in the vicinity of Plattsburg. The *Sun*, after mentioning this change of plan, which must have been a sore disappointment to the republicans of Pittsfield, requested the patriotic ladies, who had been diligently knitting socks and mittens for the soldiers, to send them to the house of Colonel Larned. In response, four hundred and eighty-seven pairs were

sent in, and immediately forwarded to the army by Major Melville. The contributions were: "From Pittsfield and a part of Hancock, 193; Cheshire, 143; Lanesboro, 51; Williamstown, 30; Dalton (six families only), 19; and a few pairs from a couple of patriotic ladies in Lenox."

The winter passed quietly, at the Cantonment.

On the 20th of April, 1813, Jonathan Allen was appointed deputy quartermaster-general, with the rank of captain, and detailed for service at Pittsfield. The expenditures by Captain Allen, in his department, were of course, in addition to those made by Major Melville. Indeed, they formed a large part of the money which the war brought to Pittsfield. His estimates for the year 1813, in which the requirements were much less than in the succeeding year, were twenty-four thousand four hundred dollars; the items being for horses, wood, straw, powder, transportation, provender, and contingent expenses. For the month of December, 1814, the estimate for the same items, with the exception of the purchase of horses, was seven hundred and sixty-six dollars; and for the month of January, 1815, the estimate was eight hundred and fifteen dollars; for the month of February, 1815, sixteen hundred and ninety-two dollars.

These are the only estimates of which we have obtained copies; but they sufficiently indicate the expenditures at the post, by the quartermaster's department.

Captain Allen experienced the same difficulty which Major Melville did from the impoverished condition of the national treasury. He appears to have been left unprepared to meet pressing demands. But his first embarrassment, was from claims for taxes upon the Cantonment grounds and buildings. The federal legislature of the state had refused to cede the site to the United States; and the democratic authorities of the town pressed for the payment of taxes upon the land and buildings.

Lieutenant Wheelock, also, on his march from Boston, left several of his men sick, without any descriptive list, or written order for their support, and when some of them died, those who had cared for them applied to Captain Allen for payment, which he had no legal right to make. In January, 1814, he was ordered to forward, as soon as practicable, one thousand blankets, one thousand coats, one thousand vests, one thousand overalls, and thirty-six pairs of stockings, to Boston; but was unable to do so,

from lack of funds, "not having had a dollar of public money since the previous September." He adds: "To keep the troops on this Cantonment (four hundred and fifteen now present) with fuel and such other expenses, as they could not do without, has exhausted all my resources, of which I also notified Mr. Monroe¹ by my accounts, and by letters, at least half a dozen times, since September; but have not received the mark of a pen from him, except to make monthly summary statements. * * * I shall have the clothing for New York packed and ready to start immediately after I am in cash."

In another letter, a few days later, he says: "My estimate of expenses for this Cantonment, in my department, exceed eight hundred dollars per month, and no money here to be had: all of which I have notified the secretary of war several times, and, unless I am shortly relieved, I must stop. The article of wood alone, which the men *must* have, costs about four hundred dollars monthly."

The energetic remonstrances of Captain Allen seem to have been successful in securing a proper attention at the war-department to the pecuniary necessities of the Cantonment.

With the opening of the campaign of 1813, the movement of troops westward recommenced, and their arrival and departure, in larger or smaller detachments continued to enliven the town, and afford food for conjecture as to future operations.

About the 1st of August, 1813, most of the troops having been withdrawn to the front, it was determined to concentrate the prisoners of war, from several other depots, at Pittsfield, under the charge of Major Melville, who was appointed deputy-marshal of Massachusetts. On the 13th of August, Captain Allen received orders to prepare the barracks for the reception of six hundred men of this class, which he did by surrounding one of the buildings previously erected with a fence ten feet high, and building a guard-room properly furnished with arms, handcuffs, fetters and chains for the restraint of the unruly, and with proper furniture in the other rooms, for the use of the peaceable.

Four hundred prisoners were expected immediately, but only two hundred were in charge on the 1st of December. Seventeen British officers of militia, magistrates and prominent citizens.

¹ James Monroe, acting secretary of war.

arrested near Niagara, for some special reason, reached town on the 11th of August, and were paroled at Cheshire.

From this time to the close of the war, most of the officers resided at Cheshire on parole; smaller numbers at Stockbridge, and a few at Pittsfield. General Riall, captured at Lundy's Lane, boarded at Captain Campbell's coffee-house.

Dr. Timothy Childs was appointed visiting-physician to the prisoners confined at Pittsfield and Cheshire; and in his official statement at the close of the war, he reports that the whole number of private soldiers and non-commissioned officers confined at the Cantonment between September 12, 1813, and the close of the war, was over fourteen hundred; and the average, over six hundred. In addition to these, there were a proportionate number of officers, besides a hundred on parole at Cheshire and Stockbridge.

Captain Allen reported above two hundred prisoners at the barracks in December, 1813; about one thousand, December 1, 1814; and nearly fifteen hundred, January 1, 1815. The *Sun*, of February 2, 1815, states that there were then fourteen hundred prisoners, and that three or four hundred more were expected that week. Rev. Mr. Hibbard, writing loosely from memory in the year 1840, mentions "several thousand;" and other memories, as well as tradition, are equally liberal: but there is no reason to doubt that the official statements, quoted above, are correct.

The first-coming prisoners were quartered, as has been stated, in one of the barracks. But, on the 26th of December, 1814, Captain Allen received a requisition from Major Melville to take immediate measures for fitting the two barns in the rear of the Cantonment for the reception of fifteen hundred prisoners of war on the 15th of October. These barns were two hundred feet long each, and the probable cost of remodeling them as prisoners' barracks, was estimated at between two thousand and three thousand dollars; and Captain Allen having no public funds in his possession for that purpose, and no expectation of any, declined the task; but consented that Major Melville should undertake it, although it belonged more properly to the quartermaster's department.

Major Melville, the next morning, repaired to the house of Captain Hosea Merrill, who was an extensive lumber-dealer and builder—and, moreover, an ardent democrat and supporter of the

war—and urged him to undertake the task at once. But it happened to be Sunday; and Captain Merrill would not so much as talk upon the subject; his many years of service in the revolutionary army having not in the least weakened his New England scruples concerning labor on the Sabbath. On Monday, however, without questioning the probability of pay from the government, he began work in earnest.

The specifications required for two of the rooms, windows protected by heavy iron-gratings; and, around the entire building, a plank-fence two inches thick, twelve feet high, and with stout hemlock-posts sunk five feet in the earth. The plank was as yet all in the log, and some of the logs were standing in the forest. The iron was at Boston; and the workmen were nearly all yet to be engaged. But loggers were briskly set at work; the saw-mill at Pontoosuc ran night and day; the prisoners already in barracks were pressed into service; the iron was received and the gratings made by blacksmith Ezekiel Bates. The last stroke of the workman's hammer was heard just as the first squad of new prisoners marched into the barracks.

Justus Merrill, a son of the builder, returning from his brief campaign in Boston, was appointed steward of the prison made of one of the barns, and William Janes of the other. Mr. Janes's brother, Ethan, then a lieutenant in The Blues, was already steward of the prison in the barracks.

During the first year of the depot, there was no especial trouble with the prisoners. To be sure, although a mounted patrol constantly made the circuit of each prison during the night, in addition to the sentries who were always on guard, there was occasionally an escape, which the republicans were fain to attribute to the aid of the political opponents of the war, and the friends of Great Britain in the town; as they did the very moderate number of desertions which took place. But there is not the slightest evidence that any aid was given, in either case, by any reputable member of the federal party; or indeed by anybody except such as, whatever political faith they professed, would have been tempted to a more serious offense by a handsome bribe. The first escape was that of two spirited young officers, Lieutenant Walter Kerr and Ensign Alexander Greig, who are known to have bribed the sentry. A reward of a hundred dollars was offered, without effect, for their capture; and, although no federal-

ist of repute would have probably aided in their escape, it is not unlikely that there were many who, if they had met them in their flight, would not have considered it an imperative duty to detain them.

Many of the prisoners during the first year were Germans, and it was noticed that, although, when exchanged, they returned often for the third or fourth time, yet the fortunes of war did not seem to depress them. They explained that, having observed that the German regiment was always assigned to the most exposed points, they preferred life in a comfortable prison to hard life in camp, and death in a war which did not concern them. The kindness which they received, thus met a probably not altogether unexpected return.

The prisoners were also permitted to avoid the irksomeness of confinement, and earn an honest penny by "hiring out" to parties responsible for their return. The labor dearth was thus relieved; and few, if any, seized the opportunity to escape.

In the fall of 1813, and still more in the summer of 1814, the number of the prisoners increased, and their character was changed, by the victories on the lakes and on the northern frontier; and, although the system of kind treatment was persisted in, more caution was required in the management and guarding of the depot.

Among the prisoners there was now a much larger proportion of native-born British subjects; and these, frequently, of a class not easily touched by kindness. Many of them were habitually unruly; and, on two occasions at least, plots to escape in a body and by violence, were formed, and it became necessary to cover the prisons with the cannon, of which the post had four nine-pounders, with a threat of firing unless order was restored. At other times the small-arms of the guard sufficed.

The least troublesome of the prisoners were the Germans. The most unruly and dangerous were about one hundred and seventy marines and sailors—the survivors of a picked detachment sent out from the lake-fleet, who had been enticed up one of the rivers in pursuit of a body of militia, which, when it reached the desired point, turned upon its pursuers, killed a large number at the first fire, and captured the rest.

This party was full of the spirit usually attributed to the British tar, and kept the prison in a perpetual turmoil by their

mischievous pranks, or more serious misdemeanors. When the news of peace came, forty of them were confined in the guard-room, upon a diet of bread and water, as ringleaders in breaking into the hospital store-room, and stealing the wines and liquors prepared for the sick, upon which they became uproariously intoxicated and openly revolted. They were in the guard-room house, when General Weinbold of the British army, who was making the tour of the depots for prisoners, arrived; and to him they made grievous complaints. But the general, who was not inexperienced in such cases, only replied very quietly, "Oh, yes, you're as innocent as sucking doves. You only robbed a hospital of supplies provided for your own sick, and threatened to kill those who wanted to treat you kindly. It's my opinion, you are only too lightly punished."

It is a curious fact that the most earnest desire, and the most serious attempt, to break prison, were after it was known that peace was declared, and that the prisoners were shortly to be given up at the nearest and most convenient British post, which happened to be, as regarded Pittsfield, the famous Isle-aux-Noix, at the foot of Lake Champlain. Many of the prisoners were reluctant to return to Europe at all, especially in the character of soldiers. So determined were they, in fact not to do so, that it would have been impossible to get them into Canada without a strong guard, had not General Weinbold promised that, as soon as possible after their exchange, they should be paid off and discharged, with an additional gift of land in that province.

There is no reason to doubt that, in making this promise, General Weinbold was sincere. The wars which had so long agitated Europe were supposed to be ended; England and her allies victorious; and Napoleon crushed and helpless in the Island of Elba. There seemed to be no better use to which England could put her superfluous soldiers in America than by transforming them into loyal colonists. Still, many of the prisoners were distrustful, and the task of taking them to the Isle-aux-Noix, to be delivered up, was not considered a desirable or safe one. The stewards of the other prisons declining it, Mr. Justus Merrill went in charge of all; and, with the exception of some unavoidable losses by desertion, he accomplished his task successfully, and delivered up his charge to the satisfaction of the British agents. When the first detachments marched, it was yet in early spring.

the ground alternately freezing and thawing; and the soldiers, whose feet were tender after their long confinement, suffered much. They were also troubled with doubts as to what would be done with them at the end of the journey; and these doubts proved to be well-founded. No sooner had the last detachment reached Canada, than they learned, to their dismay, that the great Emperor, escaping from Elba, was again in France, and at the head of an immense army, ready for a desperate and doubtful struggle.

Many of the prisoners, just released from Pittsfield, might have cared very little for this, except that from it resulted a "military necessity," which compelled the British government, instead of leaving them as peaceful, and as they hoped prosperous, settlers in Canada, to send them across the ocean, to again engage in conflict. They declared with imprecations that if they had known this before, they would never have crossed the lines. But there was now no help. They were marched rapidly to Quebec, placed upon transports, and reached the seat of war in season for Waterloo. These and other soldiers released by the peace from service in America, may have turned the scales which so long hung suspended upon that eventful field.

The treatment of the British prisoners of war at the Pittsfield depot, as at others, was distinguished by marked kindness and humanity; this having been a matter of pride and honor, as well as of feeling, with all grades of the officers who had charge of them. Mr. James Prince, marshal of the district of Massachusetts, writing to Dr. Timothy Childs, at the close of the war, said: "I cannot fail to observe to you, on this occasion, the very great consolation I experience from reflection on the general conduct of all the gentlemen who have had any agency with prisoners in this district; by which, not only has the condition of a class of unfortunate men, placed in our power by the fortunes of war, been ameliorated, as far as depended on them, but it enables us to present these good offices in contrast with, and as the counterpart of, the conduct to our citizens detained as prisoners of war,—ours, the splendid tablet of mercy and kindness to conquered foes, imitating the benevolence of Deity; theirs, the ferocity of demons."

With regard to Dr. Childs's own services, in a letter concerning the final settlement of accounts, the marshal writes:

That your services would have been constant, arduous and successful was to be expected from your well-known character for patriotism, zeal and professional skill; and it was from these considerations that, when I proposed the appointment, I felt peculiarly gratified that you signified your acceptance.

When the establishment at Pittsfield took place, both its extent and its duration were uncertain, as it respected me, who, although the medium to introduce it, was known to be a subordinate character; and that every officer placed there, as well as the management of its concerns, was dependent upon the will and control of the commissary-general of prisoners. A minute statement of my doings at Pittsfield, was, therefore, transmitted to Washington, immediately upon my return from that place, in which your appointment and terms were made known. Here my agency ended. If, therefore, the number of prisoners has exceeded what was calculated upon at the commencement of the establishment, and, from the great number of wounded men, your duties have been more than ordinarily severe, I cannot for a moment doubt that a representation on your part, certified by Major Melville, the officer charged with the execution of the instructions of the commissary-general, will be received with candor at Washington, and rewarded with liberality.

The representation was forwarded to the commissary-general, John Mason, and that officer, in response, and also, "taking into consideration the high testimonies in Dr. Childs's favor, adduced by the marshal of Massachusetts," determined to comply with his request to be placed on the same footing with a hospital-surgeon in the United States army; the compensation to date from the time the increase in the number of prisoners took place.

As the residence of some of the prisoners at Cheshire, and others at Stockbridge, rendered it impossible for Dr. Childs to attend to them at all times personally, and as he frequently required aid at Pittsfield, especially after a severe battle at the north, he was also allowed the pay of a surgeon's mate; and compensation for medicines furnished. He actually received as follows: For the months of September and October, ranking as surgeon's mate, and including commutation for servant, forage for horse, and rations, \$158; from November 1, 1813, when the increase of prisoners began, until May 30, 1815, when the service ceased, ranking as hospital-surgeon, and including pay at the rate of \$75 per month, assistants' pay at \$45 per month, with servant's pay, rations, etc., \$3,892. For medicines dispensed, \$325. A total of \$4,375. Dr. Childs's assistants were his son, Dr. H. H.

Childs, Dr. Daniel Barker, of Adams, and Dr. Isaac Hodges, of Cheshire.

Probably he had other occasional aid ; but we are not informed by whom it was given, nor what compensation he paid to any of his assistants.

Both the British prisoners and the soldiers at the Cantonment, had the proclivity usual in such cases, to sell the clothing and blankets provided by their respective governments ; and, especially as the close of the war approached, the officers at the Cantonment had great trouble in executing the law against that practice. In fact, many English blankets were left in the town, and became treasured heir-looms in some families. But, in the enthusiasm for supplying the soldiers of the Union in the civil war of 1861-5, some of them were drawn from their hiding-places ; and, after the repose of half a century, found themselves again in the turmoil of camp and field.

It could not be expected that in a war like that of 1812, the soldiery of Pittsfield would perform such conspicuous service as distinguished them in the revolution. But, nevertheless, their record was distinguished and honorable. The two regiments of infantry—the 9th and 21st—in which the town was most largely represented, became noted, in the army of the northern frontier, for their gallantry, their efficiency and their losses.

We have not the means of following them through their several campaigns ; but whenever they are alluded to, it is in the most honorable terms. The 9th acquired its sanguinary sobriquet previous to the campaign of 1814, being so styled by Captain Ingersoll in his call for recruits in the spring of that year. “None but gentlemen, and gentlemen’s sons,” says his advertisement, “need apply for admission to the ranks of the Bloody 9th.” The standard of gentility is very sensibly defined, by inference from the context, to be “honesty and sobriety ;” under which test it is to be hoped the gentry of Berkshire were not a very circumscribed circle.

Both regiments did grand service, whenever they had opportunity, throughout the war ; but they won their brightest laurels in the series of sanguinary conflicts and glorious victories at Chippewa, Lundy’s Lane, Niagara Falls and Fort Erie ; in some, or all, of which Captain Harris’s dragoons also performed brilliant exploits, and contributed the most essential aid in critical emer-

gencies. In all these battles, the 9th and 21st were with the foremost in sacrifice and achievement. The brave 9th, 11th and 25th—the remnants of Winfield Scott's veteran brigade, which had suffered terribly in the previous battles—we are told by Lossing, were hurried into the battle of Niagara, without warning or preparation. All day they fought valiantly; and at ten o'clock at night, the shattered remnants of the brigade, commanded by such officers of the 9th as remained, rallied round the tattered colors of the 11th, and kept the field.

It was at this battle, also, that the 21st performed an exploit which ranks in history with the charge of The Six Hundred at Balaclava, although it has not yet found its poet. "The action," says Salma Hale in his brief story of the war, "was a succession of engagements; in one of the earlier of which the Americans were sorely annoyed into whatever part of the field they might drive the enemy, or be driven, by the British artillery, stationed on a commanding eminence, near Lundy's Lane. 'Can you storm that battery?' said General Ripley to Colonel Miller. 'I'll try, sir!' was the laconic answer. Giving the word of command to his men, they, with steady courage, ascended the hill, advanced to the muzzles of the cannon, killed with their muskets several artillerymen on the point of firing their pieces, and drove the remainder before them. Both parties were instantly re-enforced; and the enemy made a daring effort to regain their cannon. They were repulsed, but quickly repeated the attempt. Nearly all the opposing forces gathered around this position; and to possess it was the sole object of both armies. Again the enemy were repulsed, but again they renewed the effort. After a violent conflict, they were, a third time, driven from the hill. The firing then ceased, the British troops were withdrawn; and the Americans were left in quiet possession of the field."

In these latter charges, General Ripley led his brigade in person; and some of the most remarkable hand-to-hand conflicts on record, were witnessed. Bayonet interlocked with bayonet, the blaze of opposing muskets crossed each other, and sometimes, the rare spectacle of officers measuring swords was seen.

Dr. Elisha Lee Allen of Pittsfield, was assistant-surgeon of the 21st; and, in a letter to his brother, Captain Jonathan Allen, giving a glowing account of the battle, he says that one

officer of that regiment was killed and six wounded; and that, in the 9th all, but two, officers, were either killed or wounded.

In the defense of Fort Erie, on the 15th, what was left of both regiments was again desperately engaged, and suffered severely. The same occurred in the famous sortie from that fort, on the 17th; and, while near the head of the 21st, General Ripley received a painful and dangerous wound.

General Ripley, when taking leave of the 21st, upon his promotion, enumerated, as the engagements in which they had taken part, under him, in the early part of the war, York, Chrysler's Farm, Fort George and Sackett's Harbor. And in most, if not all, of these, the 9th also took part.

When the army was reduced to a peace basis in 1815, the following officers from Pittsfield were retained: Captain Reynolds M. Kirby, aid to General Ripley, Lieutenant Thomas Childs, Captain David Perry, First Lieutenant William Browning, First Lieutenant (captain by brevet) Benjamin F. Larned, Surgeon's Mate E. L. Allen. There were also two officers retained who had married Pittsfield ladies, and made Pittsfield for a time their home, General Eleazer W. Ripley and Captain (major by brevet) Benjamin F. Watson.

Captain Thomas Childs, son of Dr. Timothy Childs, was born in 1795. During the war he served in the heavy artillery. He continued in the army, serving with credit in the Seminole and Mexican wars, and at his death, held the rank of brigadier-general.

Captain Larned was the son of Darius Larned, and Eunice Williams Larned, daughter of Deacon William Williams, the noted Dalton loyalist. He continued in the army through life; and, at his death in 1862, held the post of paymaster-general. He was buried in the Pittsfield cemetery.

Dr. Elisha Lee Allen, son of Rev. Thomas Allen, was born in 1783, and died at Pas Christien, Louisiana, September 5, 1817; falling a victim to his conscientious and zealous performance of duty in attending upon soldiers suffering from yellow-fever, even when his professional associates assured him that he needed rest and medical assistance for himself.

A few weeks before the death of Dr. Allen, on the 23d of September, his brother, Solomon L. Allen, was killed by falling from the roof of a college-building, which was unfinished, at Middle-

bury, Vt. Professor Allen graduated at Middlebury, in 1815, and was elected professor of the ancient languages, a short time before his death.

Still another son of Rev. Mr. Allen, Samuel L. Allen, died at Ogeechee, near Savannah, Georgia, August 10, 1816. He was born in 1784, entered the United States army at the commencement of the war of 1812, and served with fidelity and reputation; being engaged in nearly all the hard-fought battles on what was then the western frontier.

Lieutenant William Browning, before entering the army, was a hatter. He is described by those who knew, as possessing unusual accomplishments, and a very laudable ambition.

Captain David Perry was a lawyer, who removed to Pittsfield from the east—from Boston, it is said; but our information of him is scanty.

Captain, afterwards Major, Reynolds M. Kirby, was also a lawyer in Pittsfield, and married Harriet, daughter of Colonel Simon Larned. In the nullification-excitement of 1832, he was in command of the guard stationed at the state-arsenal in Charleston, which was removed, at the request of the governor of South Carolina, to Fort Moultrie.

Eleazer Wheelock Ripley, born at Hanover, N. H., in 1782, was the son of Rev. Sylvanus Ripley, first professor of divinity at Dartmouth college, and grandson of Rev. Dr. Eleazer Wheelock, the founder and first president of that institution. He was also a lineal descendant of Miles Standish. He graduated at Dartmouth in 1800, and settled, in the practice of the law, at at Fryeburg in Maine. Being a member of the Massachusetts house of representatives, when, in January, 1812, Joseph Story resigned the speakership on his appointment as judge of the United States supreme court, Mr. Ripley was chosen to fill the vacancy. In 1811, he married Miss Love, daughter of Rev. Thomas Allen, a lady to whom tradition attributes unusual charms of mind and person; with whose family that of her husband was already connected by the marriage of Rev. Dr. William Allen to the daughter of the second President Wheelock.

At the breaking out of the war, Mr. Ripley received a commission as lieutenant-colonel in the 21st regiment: of which, Mr. Hildreth says: "A lieutenant-colonelcy was given to Eleazer W. Ripley, a young democrat from Maine, who had succeeded Story

as speaker of the late democratic house of representatives. Ripley's subsequent conduct justified this appointment." Lieutenant-Colonel Ripley came back to Pittsfield, where he had married the previous year, at the head of a fine detachment of men which he had raised in Maine. His conduct in the field was so creditable that, in March, 1814, he was promoted brigadier-general in company with Scott, Gaines and Macomb. In the campaign of the following summer he served gallantly; and at the sortie of Fort Erie, on the 17th of September, while at the head of the 21st regiment, then engaged at close quarters with the enemy, received a very dangerous wound in the neck, from which a tedious and painful confinement resulted, during which he was faithfully attended by his young wife.

In November, congress voted to Generals Brown, Scott, Gaines, Miller, Porter and Ripley, the thanks of the nation; and, to each, a gold medal. That of General Ripley bore on one side, his bust, in profile, his name and military title; on the other, a figure of Victory, hanging upon the branches of a palm-tree a tablet inscribed with the names Chippewa, Niagara, Erie. New York, Massachusetts, South Carolina and Georgia, also voted thanks, and "visible tokens of approbation" to General Ripley.

When he returned to Pittsfield, in February, 1815, the citizens honored him with a public dinner "for the great services which he had rendered the country since the commencement of the war." Most of the prominent democrats of the town, with many from other parts of Berkshire, and from the army, were present. The venerable Dr. Timothy Childs presided at the table, assisted by Generals John B. Root and Nathan Willis. The dinner was upon the 20th of February. The news of the treaty of Ghent had been received two days before, and intelligence of its ratification reached Pittsfield the next morning. It was doubtless anticipated by all the guests; and one of the points which the proceedings brought out was the readiness of the democratic mind to turn at once to the old antagonism with British manufactures.

Among the toasts were the following:

Peace: We bid thee welcome; and, as the only means of preserving thee, may we be always prepared for war.

The bayonet and the shuttle: Let us learn to manage the latter in peace as well as we have the former in war, and we shall soon be rid of British goods and British influence.

The 9th and 21st regiments: The dread of the enemy, they have achieved imperishable glory.

The memory of our heroes who have fallen in battle: Pike, Covington, Backus, Lawrence, Ludlow, Allen, and other gallant spirits. They are embalmed in the hearts of their countrymen; and the sod which covers them shall ever be moistened with tears of American gratitude.

The first volunteer toast was by General Ripley:

Massachusetts: May her energies be combined in that course of policy which shall give her an influence commensurate with the valor of her sons in war, and their enterprise in peace.¹

The following volunteer toasts were given:

By Dr. Childs. Brigadier-General Ripley: He has bravely defended the injured rights of his country; unfading laurels are his reward.

By Colonel Simon Larned. A soldier's honor; his all. His precious heritage must never be wrested from him by force, nor contaminated by the finger of malice or the tongue of duplicity.

By Lieutenant Browning. Brigadier-General Ripley: The hero of Massachusetts, and the savior of the army at Niagara Falls. May his glory never be tarnished by secret enemies.

The peculiar undertone of these sentiments arose from a quarrel then existing between General Ripley and General Brown, his commander in the invasion of Canada; where the latter, after having been severely wounded and carried from the field, claimed the right still to command; which General Ripley, the officer next in rank, denied; and in violation of Brown's express orders, prudently recrossed the river.

Ripley was finally sustained by the government; and his friends emphasized their approbation by the various tokens we have enumerated.

Hildreth thus shrewdly explains the philosophy of the disagreement between Brown and Ripley:

Brown and Scott, inflamed with a strong passion for military distinction, desired anxiously to show that there were officers and men in the American army with courage to face the enemy, and skill and determi-

¹ Notwithstanding the unpopularity of the war in that region, and especially in Massachusetts, that state furnished during the year 1814, over fourteen thousand troops. Indeed, Massachusetts furnished more recruits than any single state; and lukewarm New England more than all the hot slave-states, who were ever clamorous for war, put together. Lossing, War of 1812.

nation enough to beat him in any equal battle. * * * Brown obtained leave to undertake a new invasion of Canada. Ripley, an able officer, but without any enthusiasm for mere fighting for the sake of it, thought the expedition Quixotic, the force much too small, and, should the enemy obtain the command of the lake, likely to be cut off and obliged to surrender.

General Ripley was one of the four brigadiers retained in the reduction of the army to a peace-basis; the others being Scott, Gaines and Macomb. In 1816, he was assigned to the command of the military district whose head-quarters were at New Orleans. In 1820, he resigned, but remained in that city in the practice of the law; and in 1836, was chosen representative in congress, which office he held until his death in 1839.

Maj. Benjamin Watson was born at Newport, R. I., in 1789, and entered the army, in 1812, as second lieutenant in the 24th infantry, and in the following year was successively promoted first lieutenant and adjutant, with the rank of captain. In 1814, he was breveted major for gallant conduct at the battle of Niagara Falls. In the reduction of the army he was retained as major in the 6th infantry. In August, 1820, being then in command of the post at Pittsfield, he married Miss Elizabeth Marsh of that town, a granddaughter of Dea. Wm. Williams of Dalton. He died Oct. 4, 1827, in the house of his friend, Gen. E. P. Gaines, at Newport, Ky., and was buried in the private burying-ground of Gen. Zachary Taylor.

Captain Jared Ingersoll was the son of a well-known earnest democrat of the same name. His mother was, before her second marriage, the widow of Colonel John Brown, of revolutionary fame. Captain Ingersoll, the younger, was born in 1787. Like his father, a very ardent democrat, he entered the army at the commencement of the war, and served with conspicuous bravery. Even in the Bloody 9th, his gallantry was considered exceptional. His name and that of Major Kirby were frequently mentioned with the highest commendation in the dispatches of commanding officers. The citizens of Pittsfield recognized his merits by the presentation of a costly sword with a scabbard of solid silver. After the war he was for many years deputy-sheriff and coroner, holding the latter office at his death in 1871.¹

¹ It is extremely difficult to obtain information of the officers and soldiers of Pittsfield in the war of 1812. Even the fallen heroes, who were promised such lasting gratitude at the Ripley dinner, are so forgotten that we can learn the Christian name of only one: Hiram Backus.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WAR OF 1812—POLITICAL EVENTS CONCERNING IT—THE MILITIA—PEACE.

[1812-1815.]

Opening of the war, and position of parties concerning it—Resolutions of Pittsfield in support of the national government—Washington Benevolent Society—Celebration of Washington's birthday—Election of John W. Hulbert to congress—Spies arrested and prisoners of war escape—Critical position of the country—Massachusetts militia called out—The question of their command-in-chief—Patriotic action of Pittsfield—The militia-system and Pittsfield militia—Berkshire militia marched to Boston—Chaplain Billy Hibbard's account—News of peace received with joyful demonstrations.

THE establishment of a military post at Pittsfield could not fail to increase the number and ardor of the supporters of the war; and therefore the violence of their antagonism to the friends of peace. This must have happened wherever, in any community politically divided upon the rightfulness of the conflict, the Cantonment had been placed. But the sources of irritation were multiplied by the location of the town in a state which openly set itself in opposition to the war, and threw all the obstacles it could, in the way of its successful prosecution by the general government.

The federalists of New England, with singular forgetfulness of the teachings of their fathers, and of the traditions from which they derived their name, refused any genuine acquiescence in the declaration of war, by the authority to whom the constitution entrusted the war-making power. If they did not, in arms or by furnishing supplies, afford aid and comfort to the enemy, they hung upon the rear of the armies of the republic with all their great moral force, and with all that could be effected through the state-governments in their control; who, for that purpose, made

use of every power which they could wrest to themselves by any interpretation of the constitution.

In Massachusetts, especially, those who had emphatically proclaimed their desire for a stronger government of the Union than was provided by the federal constitution, now avowed their belief in the extreme doctrines of state-rights. The position of the commonwealth was almost that of Kentucky in the civil war of 1861. She was willing to aid, in her own way, in the defense of her own territory, if it should be invaded; and to labor, also in her own way, for the return of peace, without regard to its terms; but not to join in the offensive operations of the national government, or in the defense of other states by her militia, or by encouraging recruiting within her borders. She even, at first, refused to place her militia under the command of the officer assigned to the department by the president, although it was to be employed within her own borders, and for her own defense: thus creating two rival military authorities in the same territory. Passively, and by necessity, submitting to the establishment of recruiting-stations in her towns, she attempted to neutralize their effects; discouraging enlistments by the solemn declarations of her governor and resolutions of her legislature that the conflict, they were asked to engage in, was unnecessary, unjust and wicked. By petty acts of legislation, she did her best to embarrass the federal officers within her limits. Finally, in 1814, while a doubtful war was waging with a powerful enemy, she called a convention of other disappointed states, at Hartford, to change the constitution of the United States, which "had failed," she said, through her legislature, "under the administration of those now in power, to secure to Massachusetts and to New England generally, those equal rights and benefits, the great objects of its formation, and which cannot be relinquished without ruin." "The method of procuring amendments—the probable necessity of which had been foreseen—provided for in the constitution itself, was too slow of operation for the present crisis."¹ And, therefore, she called together the delegates of neighboring states in secret convention, to radically change the fundamental law of the nation, hastily, and in violation of the method which had been agreed to by the great convention,

¹ Hildreth's History of United States, vol. vi, p. 532.

over which Washington presided. It can hardly be charged upon the opposition, as an excess of jealousy, that when a convention met and conducted its business in profound secrecy, with an object like that which had been declared in the above quotation they attributed to it, a design to destroy the Union, and even to form an alliance between Old and New England. Some indeed, even went so far as to charge upon the federal party a purpose to return to the original colonial state, or to erect a kingdom, with some scion of the house of Brunswick on the throne. Many defenses of the course of the commonwealth at this era have been published, and there were many pretexts for the acts cited. Her best excuse is the heat of party-passion, and the sense of wrong suffered, in the precipitation of the war, and in the anti-commercial measures by which it was preceded.

But whatever of defense or excuse there may have been for the federalists, the existence of a war with the old enemy, and the adhesion of what were left of the tories of the revolution to the peace-party, served to awaken all the old ultra-whig feeling in Pittsfield; and the democratic leaders spared no effort to fan the well-preserved embers. Nor did the violence of the enemy and the imprudence of the federal orators render this a hard task. The employment of Indian allies by the British commanders, the massacre of Frenchtown, the tales of suffering told by American soldiers, returning from British prisons, to those who daily witnessed the kindness with which those of the enemy at the Cantonment were treated; all sufficiently inflamed the popular mind against those politicians who in the slightest degree favored the enemies of the country. Governor Strong's unfortunate utterance that America was warring against "the Bulwark of the Protestant religion," was derisively quoted in connection with each new outrage of the British soldiery.

But the war-feeling in Pittsfield did not wait for these incitements before it unmistakably manifested itself in opposition to the peace-sentiments of eastern Massachusetts.

When the news of the declaration of war reached Boston, on the 23d of June, 1812, the legislature was in session; and Governor Strong, who had just been elected by a small majority over his democratic predecessor, Elbridge Gerry, immediately transmitted to it the exciting document. The house of representatives, in which there was a decided federal majority—nearly two

to one—promptly adopted an address, regretting the declaration, and expressing their sense of its inexpediency. The democrats, however, by means of the famous “Gerrymandering” process, had retained a majority in the senate; and adopted an address of a precisely opposite tenor to that of the house. It set forth the long array of outrages committed upon American commerce and citizens, and declared that the constitutional authorities of the country had been driven by them to submit their cause to the God of battles. This address was a well-directed appeal to popular sentiment, and especially calculated to inflame the passions of the partisans of its authors.

The action of the federalists in congress and the legislature, however injurious its effects may have been in checking the co-operation of the whole people in the support of the war, was in its tone calm and dignified, and suggested no overt acts in opposition to the government. But many town-meetings in eastern Massachusetts were less cautious. Several held in Boston were particularly intemperate in their language. One held on the 6th of August, recommended a convention similar to that which actually met at Hartford as late as December, 1814. This resolution was earnestly opposed by Hon. Samuel Dexter, one of the most prominent members of the federal party, who said that such a convention as was proposed was unconstitutional, and that the government had the inherent power to put it down. Defining his own position and that of the other war-federalists, he declared that it was now too late to speculate upon the various causes which may have tended to produce the rupture with England; and, however he might deplore the existing state of things, he, nevertheless, considered it his duty, since war had been declared, to aid the government to the utmost of his power in maintaining it; that, in his opinion, Great Britain had afforded sufficient ground to justify the declaration; but that, at any rate, the president and congress of the United States were constitutionally the only competent judges upon that point; and that, having sworn as a citizen to support the constitution and laws of the Union, he should consider himself nothing more nor less than a perjured traitor, were he now, since the question of war had been by them determined, to oppose, or hesitate to support, the measure.

The majority of the citizens of Pittsfield entertained views similar to those of Mr. Dexter, and expressed them in the old

way; passing the following resolutions, by a very decided majority, in a full town-meeting held for that purpose on the 27th of August, there having first been a very spirited discussion:

PREAMBLE AND RESOLUTIONS.

Whereas, the inhabitants of the town of Boston have, at sundry meetings of said inhabitants lately held, passed sundry resolutions, and recommended a system of measures to be adopted and pursued by such other disaffected towns or voluntary associations in this commonwealth as shall show a disposition to concur with them therein, which, under pretense of *aiding the civil authorities of the state* "in the suppression of tumults, riots and unlawful assemblies," which have neither arisen or been threatened, have obviously in view the organization of an *armed force* within the bosom of the commonwealth, for some *unavowed* and *illegitimate* purpose—and have also appointed delegates to a convention of the state, unrecognized by the constitution and the laws—to be convened by no public or lawful authority—composed of persons deputed in no regular or authorized manner—and for the effecting of objects neither specified nor known to the good people of the commonwealth at large. And certain other towns and associations of disaffected individuals, having also adopted various measures of a similar import, tendency and design. And whereas, the aforesaid proceedings, when taken in connection with the refusal of the governor of this commonwealth, and of the state of Connecticut, to order out such detachments of the militia of these states as are deemed necessary by the president of the United States, for the defense thereof against the invasions or depredations to which they are exposed on the part of a foreign nation with whom the United States are engaged in a just and necessary war. And whereas, the sentiments now openly propagated and avowed through the medium of the public newspapers printed in the town of Boston, and elsewhere, indicate an intention of withdrawing from the service of their country, at this most interesting crisis, the military force of the state, and arraying the people and civil authorities thereof against the authority of the United States, and against the just cause in which our country is now contending. And it is therefore deemed necessary, that the most prompt and efficient measures should forthwith be adopted on the part of such of the inhabitants of this commonwealth as are resolved to *stand* or *fall* with their country, for the purpose of meeting all such events as may be brought upon them through the agency of such alarming and unjustifiable combinations, as well as for the upholding of the constituted authority of the Union in all lawful measures which they may adopt to vindicate the just rights of the nation abroad, and to maintain its authority at home.

Therefore,

Resolved, as the sense of this town, That we have all that confidence in our national government, which flows from an attachment to its principles and an approbation of its measures. That we will obey its laws, execute to the utmost of our ability its constitutional requisitions, suppress and defeat all unlawful combinations against its authority; and in despite of all *open or insidious* attempts to withdraw our allegiance from our country—*will stand or fall in its common cause.*

Resolved, That we have seen with much regret, but entirely without dismay, sundry resolutions and proceedings of the town of *Boston*; which, *under the pretense* of suppressing tumultuous and unlawful assemblies of the people, appear designed to arm one portion of them against the other, and to array the local and state authorities against that of the United States, instead of turning them to their proper and legitimate objects—the arrogance of its declared enemies.

Resolved, That the plan of organizing a state-convention, not recognized by the constitution or the laws of the commonwealth—called by no legitimate authority, and for effecting of no specified or avowed object, is either an idle and wanton attempt to alarm and vex the public mind with vain and nugatory projects; or to usurp unconstitutional and lawless powers, by a body having no regular title or claim to the exercise thereof—a procedure which, on the first supposition, merits our *contempt*, and the second demands, and shall receive, our *unqualified resistance.*

Resolved, That we will with equal promptitude, devote ourselves and substance to maintain the just rights of the nation against foreign aggression, and to put down *domestic usurpations* under whatever pretense they may be attempted, or under whatever local authorities they may be countenanced and supported.

Resolved, That although we have as sincere a detestation of all riotous and tumultuous proceedings as the town of *Boston* has, or would *appear* to have; yet we will not *affect* terrors which we do not feel, nor will we exhaust that spirit and that indignation with which every American bosom ought, at this moment, to beat against our foreign foes, in extravagant and passionate denunciations against our fellow-citizens of other states, who, if guilty, are amenable to their own laws, and punishable by their own civil authorities.

Resolved, That it will conduce much to the quiet of the state, if the inhabitants of the town of *Boston* would attend more to *their own concerns*, and cease to harass the good people of the commonwealth with their impracticable "*notions*" and their ambitious and illusory projects.

Resolved, That the governor of the commonwealth having refused to call out those detachments of its militia, which were deemed necessary by the president of the United States to aid in the defense of its vulner-

able points, is justly responsible for the safety of the state, and its protection against all foreign annoyances, depredations or invasion.

Resolved, That it be earnestly recommended to every citizen capable of performing military duty, to furnish and keep on hand suitable arms and equipments, and stand ready to aid the government of the United States, either in the repulsion of foreign enemies or in the suppression of unlawful combinations and usurpations against its authority and the constitutional powers of the state, *whether* under the form of conventions, or any other organized associations whatever.¹

The town, also, by vote, instructed the selectmen to purchase, in addition to the usual stock of ammunition, six casks of powder and two hundred pounds of ball; and offered a bounty of ten dollars to each of its citizens who should voluntarily enlist: to be paid within one year after the recruit was called into service.

The last clause in the last of the resolutions was aimed at the Washington Benevolent Society. This was a national secret organization, within the federal party, composed of several state societies; which in their turn were divided, and sub-divided, into county and town branches. Its political character was not concealed—although an endeavor was made to direct public attention to its social and benevolent features—and it seems to have been a formidable and efficient agency, loved and cherished by all good federalists, and cordially detested by the democrats, who saw all manner of treasonable plots concocting within its mystic circles. The power, which its opponents often experienced in unexpected and inexplicable defeats at the polls, was not to be questioned; and the democracy of 1812, after the fashion of dominant parties in war-times were slow to recognize the distinction between opposition to their measures, and treason to the country: with how much excuse in this case, the reader must judge.

The *Berkshire Reporter*, of March 11, 1813, says: "The Washington Benevolent Society of Berkshire has been established about twenty-one months, and consists of more than two thousand three hundred members. It is a most animated and interesting spectacle to behold so many good men united, like a band of brothers, solemnly pledged to inculcate and maintain the true principles of our happy constitution; to adhere to the political maxims which distinguished the glorious administration of their beloved Washington; to relieve the unfortunate; and to promote and spread as

¹ The italics in these resolutions are those of the *Pittsfield Sun*.

far as they possibly can, peace on earth and good will toward all mankind."

Each member, on his initiation, was required to sign the following pledge, which is similar in its terms to the *Reporter's* statement of principles:

We, each of us, do hereby declare that we are firmly attached to the the constitution of the United States, and to that of the state of Massachusetts [or to that of such other state as the branch society might be located in], to the principles of a free republican government, and to those which regulated the public conduct of George Washington; that we will, each of us, so far as may be consistent with our religious principles respectively,¹ preserve the rights and liberties of our country against all foreign and domestic violence, fraud or usurpation; and that, as members of the Washington Benevolent Society, we will, in all things, comply with its regulations, support its principles, and enforce its views.

The new brother, having signed this pledge, received a small volume, which contained a certificate of his membership, an engraved portrait of Washington, Washington's farewell address to his countrymen, and the constitution of the United States. This volume he made his *vade mecum*. Such were the principles held, and the obligations taken, by those who joined the Washington Benevolent Society: an organization which embraced a large portion of the citizens of the county most eminent for probity and talent, and very few with whose names it is possible—even for those who consider them to have been most mistaken in their views of duty—to associate the idea of treason or falsehood. It was, however, very possible, in the heated days of the war, for their opponents to believe the entire organization guilty of these wrongs; and the secrecy in which it enveloped its operations rendered it impossible to disprove the charges against it. Discouragement of enlistment—a practice which was common to the whole party—was not denied. And, from an act which treads so very closely upon the confines of overt treason, it is but a step to the inducing and aiding of desertions from the army; and but one more, to assist and harbor escaped prisoners of war—and even to aid in their escape.

It is, therefore, not surprising, that the democrats, including

¹ A clause inserted for the benefit of Quaker and other conscientiously non-resistant members.

most of the United States officers in garrison at Pittsfield, should attribute the escapes, desertions, malignant stories and other troubles which beset them at the Cantonment, to the secret cabals of the Washington Benevolent Society. The long and spotless lives of many of its leaders enable us to credit their denial of these charges; but to the democrats of 1812, they were not venerable fathers whose patriotism had been long proved, but active and bitter opponents of their much-loved party; often guilty, as men at such periods are apt to be, of indiscreet speech capable of an interpretation that would prove them guilty of much which their better second thought would condemn.

Still, the very existence of a secret organization of opponents of the war in the immediate vicinity of a military post and prison, rendered the strictest watchfulness on the part of its officers not only excusable, but imperative. But, whether justifiable or not, the jealousies, hatreds and assaults of the democrats were, in a great measure, concentrated upon this society. They denounced its political aims and action as treasonable, and its secrecy as intended for the most pernicious uses. They declared its benevolence to be a hypocritical pretense, and scouted its fraternal kindness.

On the other hand, there has rarely been a political organization, whose members were so thoroughly conscious that in joining it they were governed solely by the purest and noblest motives; and there was, probably, not one of them who did not consider that in the Washington Benevolent Society, he was in the best of all possible good society—at least, on this side of the Atlantic. He proudly preserved his certificate of membership while he lived—if he did not become a violent Jackson democrat, after the war—and when he died, he transmitted it, as proudly, to his children, as a testimonial that he had well-served his country; and served it, too, in company—nay, in fraternity—with the most respectable people in the county.

In the same proud spirit he walked in the procession and took his seat to listen to the oration and to eat the dinner, with which it was the delight of the society to honor the birthdays of their country and of its father. *Pater Patriæ* was their patron saint; and to him was accorded the excess of honor usually bestowed upon such personages. It is even related that on one unusually cold 22d of February, rather than forego, mar or shorten the

parade, they heroically sacrificed their ears; every one of which in the procession was frozen, while their owners moved on without flinching.

In illustration of what these celebrations were, which the people of Pittsfield in the earlier years of the century deemed so important, and enjoyed with so much zest, we print an account of one which, although among the more splendid, must represent many; and those of the democrats, or republicans, as well, for there was no essential difference in their external characteristics.

The anniversary to be celebrated was Washington's birthday—February 22, 1814. It was announced as early as the 8th of February that the "Washington Benevolent Society of the county of Berkshire, would celebrate the day at Pittsfield, with an oration by Daniel Noble, Esq., of Williamstown;" and "that every effort would be made to render the occasion splendid and agreeable." In its issue of February 17th, the *Reporter* printed the programme displayed attractively; and we copy it that the reader may, in his imagination, reproduce the scene of that cold winter-holiday:

CELEBRATION

OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTHDAY OF WASHINGTON, BY THE MEMBERS OF THE WASHINGTON BENEVOLENT SOCIETY OF THE COUNTY OF BERKSHIRE.

The members of the society will assemble at nine o'clock, A. M., at Washington Hall, in Pittsfield. Each member will appear with his badge. The meeting will continue open until half past ten o'clock, for the initiation of members. The procession will move at eleven o'clock, A. M., under the direction of the marshal, to the Union parish meeting-house. Citizens who are not members are invited to unite with the society in the celebration.

ORDER OF PROCESSION.

Marshal, Deputy-marshal, Artillery in uniform, Infantry in uniform. Citizens: 1st, young men; 2d, middle-aged men; 3d, aged men; two officers in uniform, Washington Standard, two officers in uniform, members of the society, two abreast, in thirteen divisions, each division preceded by a banner, each banner attended by two of the cavalry; visiting members of other Washington Benevolent Societies; Stewards and other officers, Secretaries and Treasurers.

urers ; Standing Committee ; Committee of Arrangements ; Orator and Chaplain. Vice-presidents : the oldest Vice-president with Washington's Farewell address ; 2d Vice-president with the Declaration of Independence ; 3d Vice-president with the Constitution of the United States ; President and an officer in uniform ; Band of music, two officers in uniform.

When the procession shall have arrived at the meeting-house, the line will halt, open to the right and left, and so continue until the procession, counter-marching, shall have passed into the meeting-house—the band playing at the door until the procession shall have moved into the house, and taken their seats. The President, oldest vice-president, the orator and chaplain, will enter the pulpit. The members will take the body pews, the military the wall pews, the ladies will be accommodated with seats in the gallery. The band of music will take the high pew in front of the pulpit. Citizens and visitors will be seated by the marshal and assistants.

EXERCISES.

1st, An Ode ; 2d, Prayer ; 3d, An Ode ; 4th, Oration ; 5th, Anthem ; 6th, Benediction ; 7th, Washington's March, by the Band.

At sunrise a National Salute and ringing of the bell. The procession will move under the discharge of cannon. The clergy of the neighboring towns are most respectfully invited to attend. All military officers are requested to appear in uniform.

Josiah Bissell, John Garfield, Eli Ensign, Butler Goodrich, Eliphalet Reddington, Gershom Buckley, Samuel Jones, Jason Clapp, Henry James, Chauncey Hulbert, *Committee of Arrangements.*

The Washington Banner, for years the pride of the society, is now in the Historical Cabinet of the Berkshire Athenæum. It is of the richest white silk, bordered with gold and fringed with blue ; and in size, about two yards wide by two and a half long. On one side it bears a fine portrait of Washington, surrounded by a profusion of warlike insignia ; on the other, the national coat of arms. The badge of the society was a strip of white parchment upon which winged Fame was blowing a trumpet and placing a wreath upon the head of Washington. It was inscribed with the words, "Washington Benevolent Society" and "*Pro Patria.*"

According to the *Reporter's* account, the celebration was all

that its grand heralding promised. Colonel Colgrove was chief-marshal, and his assistants were Ralph Warriner, and Henry Taylor. Colonel Azariah Root carried the grand banner, and thirteen smaller ones were borne by other "true disciples of Washington;" and all were guarded by members of the cavalry, "mounted on elegant grey horses." The procession moved to the firing of cannon and the ringing of the bell—only one bell unfortunately. The silvery tones of that which weekly summoned democratic Christians to the First church could not be expected to join in the federal peal. But "the procession made a grand and interesting appearance." The exercises at the meeting-house were equally satisfactory. There were two chaplains: the "excellent"—but rather eccentric—"patriot and Christian, Rev. Mr. Jennings, of Dalton," and Rev. Mr. Punderson. Of the oration, by Daniel Noble, Esq., the *Reporter* says:

The sentiments and opinions expressed by the speaker were worthy of a statesman. They displayed a depth of political knowledge and an independence of mind, which excited the admiration of the audience. The orator, in the language of truth and eloquence, called to the recollection of his hearers the happiness and glory enjoyed by our country under federal administrations. He contrasted these blessed times with the present days of gloom and despair. He showed that our present disgrace and wretchedness originated in a hatred of the character, and a departure from the principles of our beloved Washington; and he unveiled and exposed, in their true colors, the guilty authors of our nation's ruin. Deep and lasting will be the impression made on those who heard it, by this oration.

After the oration, the procession marched to Major Morgan's inn, on Bank row, where over four hundred persons partook of a dinner, with appetites sharpened for the substantial viands by the keen winter air, and for the piquant toasts by Mr. Noble's pungent eloquence.

That was the age of rhetoric, and a favorite mode for its exercise was in the elaboration of epigrammatic toasts; the most condensed form in which ideas could be expressed. A sharp and rapid discharge of these glittering, and often envenomed, points followed every public dinner; and, as the drinking of toasts was not then a mere form, but a substantial honoring of the sentiment proposed in a draught of veritable wine or some stronger beverage; and as the best hits were always received with bumpers, the com-

pany was generally in a condition, by the time the regular toasts were disposed of, to give and applaud volunteer sentiments without severe criticism.

On this occasion John W. Hulbert, the most famous wit in Berkshire tradition, sat at the head of the table, as president of the society, and guided the "flow of soul;" which, in the volunteer toasts, is said to have been of a more than commonly spicy, pointed and exuberant character.

We are able to quote, however, only a few of the regular toasts, which, with the *Reporter's* account of the oration, will show the spirit of the federal party in February, 1814:

The militia of Massachusetts: Under their lawful commander-in-chief, may they stand on our constitutional limits, and say to foreign and domestic enemies, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further."

Our country: Once happy and honorable, now sunk by democracy to the lowest depths of wretchedness and disgrace.

"O how fearful and how dizzy 'tis
To cast one's eye so low."

Our war with England: The prosperity of Bonaparte occasioned it; may his adversity speedily end it.

Free trade and sailors' rights: They have found their worst enemies in our own government.

Peace: May our spears be beaten into pruning-hooks, and our swords into plowshares; and wisdom into the heads of our national rulers.

Bonaparte: The master behind the curtain, who dances the puppets of our administration.

Our navy: It has finally conquered its worst enemies, the democrats.

The memory of Moreau, and his last words: "The scoundrel, Bonaparte."

The World's best friend: The Emperor Alexander.

These toasts were drunk with the warmest applause, followed by the discharge of cannon, and they aid us to comprehend the intensity of the terror inspired in the more conservative classes by the horrors of the French revolution and the subsequent sanguinary career of Napoleon. It must have been deep indeed when a considerable body of the most intelligent and patriotic citizens of Berkshire held up Alexander of Russia, as "the world's best friend."

At this depressing period of the war the spirit exhibited in this Pittsfield celebration, was the same which governed the

party then dominant in New England. It had, a fortnight before, manifested itself in the Massachusetts legislature, by an act which brought a number of British officers into close confinement at the Pittsfield Cantonment, by excluding them from the jails of the commonwealth. Mr. Hildreth gives the following account of the immediate cause of this act:

Dearborn's expedition against York and Fort George having placed a number of British officers in his power, the president, under the act authorizing retaliation, had ordered the close confinement of twenty-three of them intended to abide the fate of the Irishmen taken at Queenstown and sent to England to be tried for treason. Prevost, in consequence of a special dispatch from Lord Bathurst, responded by the close imprisonment of twice the number of American officers and non-commissioned officers; with a threat, if this system of retaliation was carried out, of "unmitigated severity against American cities and villages." Madison replied by shutting up a like number of British officers, and with threats to retort any further severities, in which the British might indulge; whereupon Prevost ordered all his prisoners into close confinement, an example which Madison hastened to follow. In New England, and among the federalists generally, this policy of exposing our own citizens to imprisonment and death, for the sake of a set of foreign renegades, as they were bitterly described, met with little countenance; and the escape of some of the imprisoned British officers from the jail at Worcester *gave very general satisfaction*. The democrats, indeed, complained that, while American prisoners in Canada, and at Halifax, were often subjected to very harsh treatment and gross indignities, the British officers taken by us were sure of every attention and kindness at the hands of their federal friends.

A number of prisoners confined in the Lenox, Worcester, and other Massachusetts jails, were transferred to Pittsfield; but congress soon authorized the marshals of states whose jails were closed against their prisoners, to select other places of confinement; and the penitentiary of Pennsylvania, being offered, was chiefly used.

It was a sad and apprehensive party which set out from Pittsfield, when several carriage-loads of British officers, guarded by a detachment of cavalry, left the Cantonment, as they supposed, for a prison in Kentucky. In the temper which had been manifested by both governments, there was great reason to fear that they were going to a place of military execution. As the carriages were driven off, the private soldiers, left behind as prisoners, fol-

lowed them with a perfect shower of old shoes: their mode of wishing them good luck.

Among these officers was General Riall, and a few others who had made many friends in Pittsfield, who followed them with their best wishes expressed in other forms. Many years afterwards, Dr. Robert Campbell met some of these officers in London, and they expressed to him their grateful memory of the kindness of his father and other citizens in that day of danger.

Great Britain, however, soon practically abandoned her attempt to deal with natives of Ireland naturalized in the United States, and fighting in the American army, as traitors; and the system of mutual retaliation ended.

The democrats, however, did not soon permit naturalized citizens to forget that the federalists had stigmatized Irish soldiers fighting in our army as "renegades." Nor were they unmindful of the general joy expressed by federal papers over the escape of British prisoners of war. Their disgust culminated when the Hartford convention met with closed doors. And, in Berkshire county, to meet the operations of the Washington Benevolent Society, they organized the Sons of Liberty; but this organization never attained the efficiency of its antagonist.

In the summer of 1814, the Washington Society showed its power by the election of its president, John W. Hulbert, to fill the vacancy in congress, caused by the resignation of Judge Dewey. The opposing candidate was Hon. William P. Walker, of Lenox.

Both these gentlemen were of much more than ordinary ability, and their availability as candidates, although different, was very nearly equal as to the aggregate of probable result. In eloquence and popular manners, Mr. Hulbert was much the superior of his antagonist; and in legal and scholarly attainments, at least his equal. But the democrats accused him of exceeding even the license permitted by that period, in morals; a fault which not even political malice could impute to Mr. Walker; and, while the latter was an exceedingly correct, and quite prosperous businessman, the federal candidate had to bear the unjust opprobrium caused by the failure of the Berkshire bank, of which he was a director, although not a prominent one; as well as the pecuniary embarrassment—amounting, indeed, to poverty—into which he had been brought by the same misfortune. In addition to all

this, was the prestige operating against him from the chronic political character of the district, which had not elected a federalist to congress since the choice of Theodore Sedgwick, in 1795, and, after Mr. Hulbert, never elected another.

The contest was animated, and Mr. Hulbert was chosen by a majority of only a hundred votes. His election at all, under the circumstances, was a marked triumph, and was doubtless due in a great measure to the personal popularity of the candidate. The *Sun* scolded the people bitterly for electing "a favorite" to a post of which the editor did not deem him worthy. And, while rebuking its own political friends for their "remissness in duty," being especially severe upon those in Pittsfield, it hastened—"lest the friends of the administration abroad should look upon Berkshire as a real apostate"—to assure them that the result of the election indicated no change of political sentiment.

But, while the personal popularity of Mr. Hulbert contributed greatly to his success, and even his personal friends in the democratic party were induced by the coarseness of the attacks upon him in the *Sun*, either to withhold their votes or cast them for him; it is also true that the perfect organization of the Washington Benevolent Society—stimulated by the admiration and love which he had inspired in its members, while its presiding officer—was powerful enough to turn the scale at the polls. Had no such organization existed, Mr. Walker would have almost surely been elected.

In the election for the full term, held in November, 1814, Mr. Hulbert was again chosen, and by a considerably increased majority.¹

While the friends of the war in general were exasperated by the national and state action of its opponents, minor events operating in the same direction, happened in Pittsfield. On the 3d of February, 1814, Major Melville published in the *Sun*, an advertisement regarding the escape of prisoners of war from the barracks

¹ At the expiration of his term, in 1817, Mr. Hulbert removed to Auburn, N. Y., having become so deeply impoverished by his connection with the bank, and by his devotion to his public duties, that he was compelled to borrow money of a friend to defray the expense of removal there. But at Auburn his talents were at once recognized. He soon rose to a lucrative practice, notwithstanding the laws then just enacted by the New York legislature in its jealousy of the legal profession, and was repeatedly elected to the state legislature and to congress. He died at Auburn, in 1831.

at Burlington, Vermont, and charged that their escape was aided "by evil-disposed and corrupt citizens who preferred the interests of the enemy to their country." He warned them of the consequences of such traitorous conduct as giving counsel or aid to a public enemy; and called upon all good citizens to be active and zealous in counteracting *internal*, as well as external, enemies. He also offered a reward of two hundred dollars for such information as should lead to the conviction of traitors.

In May, one hundred and fifty exchanged prisoners arrived at the Cantonment and remained in town long enough to incense the citizens by their recital of the atrocities practiced in the British prisons; which presented a strange and shocking contrast to what they constantly witnessed in the treatment of British prisoners in Pittsfield.

In August and September, there was a panic concerning British spies and emissaries. In the first week of September, two persons, one of whom was represented to be a British lieutenant, "who had been traveling extensively about the country," were arrested at Cheshire. The next week, a Canadian Frenchman and an Indian were brought to the Cantonment, handcuffed together, as spies.

Nothing was ever proved against these persons except a violation of the order of August, 1812, requiring British subjects resident in western Massachusetts to report themselves to Colonel Danforth, one of the United States deputy-marshals. Nevertheless, it is not improbable that their object in prowling about military prisons, was to aid the escape of their inmates.

In the summer of 1814, the dangers which began to thicken around the country, produced results which, although they seem natural enough in our present comprehension of American character, were surprising to those who had observed it only in its imperfect development during the formation years of the republic. Locally, among the most interesting of these results, was the proof furnished that Pittsfield federalists were thoroughly loyal to their country; however they may have thought themselves justified in discouraging its government in the prosecution of a war which they deemed unnecessary and wicked.

Their evidently sincere joy over the early victories of the American navy might, perhaps, be quoted to the same effect; but the federalists regarded the navy as their own creation: built up by

the administration of John Adams against the most violent opposition of the democrats. In its triumphs, they read as much their own glory as that of their country. In 1814, they sacrificed the pride of party to their love of country. The impending of a great and common danger left, indeed, no excuse for any party which should withhold its aid from the common defense; but the heartiness and enthusiasm with which the federalists of Pittsfield united for that purpose with their fellow-citizens of other opinions, showed that they sought none. And this union, although in its terms its immediate object was only state defense, extended a promise of future aid for all parts of the Union. Had the war lasted but another campaign under similar pressure, the federalists would probably have been found, shoulder to shoulder with the democrats, in its prosecution.

What would have been won by such a union, had it been general throughout the country, we may not now determine; but we may be sure that, however splendid its achievements might have been, it would have cost America that which she could ill afford to spare, except as the price of national existence. The British provinces might have been annexed. British capital might have lost the power to ruin the young American manufactures by competition. The verdict of Waterloo might have been reversed, and Napoleon restored to the leadership of Europe: possibly, as the federalists had once feared, then to extend his empire across the seas.

But the possibilities which, at midsummer in 1814, confronted the people of Massachusetts, and the whole country, were something very different from this. Dangers encompassed them on every side. Ever since the spring of the preceding year, British armed vessels of every class—the cumbersome, but terror-striking, seventy-four, the dashing frigate, the midge-like tender and cutter, the ubiquitous and lawless privateer—swarmed along the whole coast; keeping up an annoying blockade to the serious although not total interruption of both foreign and coastwise commerce. This flotilla, however, committed few depredations on land until the spring of 1814, when it destroyed some villages on the coast of Connecticut, and laid others, as well as detached farm-houses, under heavy contributions. In June, the enemy began to ravage the coast of Massachusetts, inflicting damage chiefly upon vessels lying in harbor or on the stocks.

The coast of Maine received similar visitations, and the territory east of the Penobscot was seized with the avowed purpose of retaining permanent possession. All these proceedings, of course, raised the utmost resentment in the breast of every American citizen; and were especially adapted to destroy whatever attachment there might have been to Great Britain.

Almost simultaneously with the arrival of fresh ships of the enemy, and his first attacks on the coast of Massachusetts, came the news of the abdication of Napoleon; leaving England, not only released from the fear of her great enemy, but at the head of the nations of Europe. She was now free to end the contest in America by a sharp and vigorous campaign. And, hard upon this intelligence, followed the information that the enemy was collecting, at Bermuda, a very formidable armament, of men and ships, which rumor, after exaggerating its numbers, destined, by turns, for New York, the Chesapeake, Washington and other points, not excepting Boston.

The most serious and agitating alarm pervaded the whole Atlantic coast; and every seaboard state hastened to give vigorous aid in the preparations for its own defense. And now Massachusetts was no exception. It was felt to be no time to raise any, except the most essential, points as to the limits of national and state authority over her militia. Both parties, for a while, seemed willing to waive, until the danger was past, all differences which stood in the way of harmonious and efficient action. It was but little that the general government asked the commonwealth to yield, and that little for the purpose of better defending her own state capital.

Brigadier-General Cushing, temporarily in command of the military department which included Massachusetts, informed Governor Strong that the regular troops at his disposal for both the forts in Boston harbor were barely sufficient to garrison one; and he proposed that the militia of the state, to be called out in compliance with an expected request of the president, should occupy the other. To secure the governor's assent to this plan, he agreed that the whole detachment, asked for the defense of Boston and other exposed points on the coast—amounting to eleven hundred men—should be subject to no officer of the general government except the commander—superintendent, the governor insisted upon calling him—of the district; retaining

only so much authority over the militia as would insure harmony of action between them and the regular troops.

Governor Strong, on his part, "although he did not suppose that in ordinary cases the militia were liable by the constitution to do garrison-duty in the forts of the United States, yet as the defense of the town of Boston was a primary object with the government of the state, and as no other method of strengthening the garrisons was suggested, he accepted the proposal. The requisition was made on the 18th of July, by General Dearborn, who had returned to the command, and confirmed the agreement made by Cushing.

A general order making the detail was issued by the adjutant-general of the state, on the 18th of July, and was obeyed by the militia with alacrity. It included no Berkshire company, and from an article in the *Sun*, of September 15th, announcing a second call, under the heading, "Massachusetts in arms at last," it seems to have attracted no attention in Pittsfield. Striking as was the indication which it afforded of impending danger, and a changed policy of state-government, no mention was made of it in the *Sun*. The *Reporter* was, perhaps, not so silent.

On the 4th of July, President Madison made a requisition upon the several states for ninety-three thousand five hundred militia; of which the quota of Massachusetts was ten thousand. The call was communicated by General Dearborn to Governor Strong, on the 4th of September, and startled him by the number of men required. It appeared also, that, notwithstanding the readiness with which the militia responded to the call of July, the agreement made by the governor with the department-commanders had given dissatisfaction to his party-friends; and that he had met many difficulties and complaints in the execution of the detail.¹

Both the requisition for troops in July and that in September, came to Governor Strong in a shape essentially different from that received in 1812; to which he returned a refusal which can hardly be condemned by those who applaud a similar maintenance of the rights and dignity of the commonwealth by Governor Andrew in the case of the two regiments raised—one of them in Pittsfield—by General Butler, in 1862. Governor Strong's

¹ Governor Strong's message, October 5, 1815.

refusal, in 1812, was based, according to the *Boston Advertiser* of 1814, upon several grounds. *First*, The requisition was insolently made; its style being essentially different from that made upon Governor Tompkins of New York, and other democratic governors, who were only *requested* to furnish the troops. *Secondly*, Governor Strong judged there was no necessity for the draft. *Thirdly*, The requisition was unmilitary and degrading to the militia; the call being for twenty *companies*, which excluded the detachment of any officer of higher grade than captain—leaving all the field and other officers to be appointed by the United States government. *Fourthly*, A part of the troops were required for service out of the state; contrary to the provisions of the federal constitution. And, *fifthly*, neither of the events had occurred which authorized the calling forth of the militia. No invasion had taken place; there was no insurrection; and the execution of the laws was not obstructed.

The call of 1814 was very different from this. The request was decorously and properly made. The troops were to be employed in the state; and to be commanded by their own officers, except in the single case agreed upon. The danger was more apparent than that of 1812; and one of the events contemplated by the constitution as authorizing the calling out of the militia—invasion—had actually occurred.

Nevertheless, Governor Strong, appalled by the magnitude of the call, and perplexed by the objections of his political supporters, did not see his duty so clearly in September as he did in July. He therefore repaired for advice to the executive council; and in accordance with their opinion, issued on the 6th of September a general order, calling out ten thousand militia; but placing them under the immediate command of a major-general. The refusal of the governor to extend the arrangement of July to the troops now called out, seems not to have attracted much attention in Berkshire at the time. The militia were only rejoiced to receive, on any terms, the long-desired order to join in the defense of their country; and that at a moment when her danger was most imminent.

In this crisis, the action of both parties was most honorable, and fully sustained the patriotic fame of the town. We quote the account printed in the *Sun*, of September 22d, the week following the marching of the Berkshire regiment.

PITTSFIELD TOWN-MEETING.—PATRIOTISM.—UNANIMITY.

With proud satisfaction, we present to the public the proceedings of the town-meeting of Pittsfield, on Monday last, at which Joshua Danforth presided, as moderator. All parties came forward *unanimously*, and sacrificed at the shrine of their common country, all their animosities and dissensions, in support of true American principles. We trust that every town in the county and state will do likewise. We shall thus present an impenetrable phalanx of patriots to the enemy, which will command her respect, obtain for us an honorable peace, and, with it, the admiration of the world.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

Whereas, a town-meeting has been convened at the request of a number of inhabitants, for the purpose of taking into consideration, "*what they in their corporate capacity ought to do to aid the constituted authorities of our country in repelling the invasion of our territory, and also to enable them in future to protect the other parts of our country from invasion.*"

And whereas, at the meeting so convened, the following persons have been chosen a committee to propose resolutions expressive of the sense of this meeting on the subject for which it is called, viz.: Oliver Root, Thomas Gold, Theodore Hinsdale, Jr., James D. Colt, Elkanah Watson and Thomas Melville, Jr.; and the committee having met, have adopted and present to their fellow-citizens the following preamble and resolutions :

Preamble. That as we have arrived at a crisis which requires the individual and joint exertions of every citizen; and that as the sacred charter of our Independence, and the safety of our country is at stake.

It has become the duty of every American to risk his life and property, to preserve the sacred inheritance, for which our fathers fought and bled. If incentives are necessary to rouse us to a true sense of our danger, and our duty; let us consider that not only our state is invaded, but our enemy has declared it to be her intention, to take possession of, and to re-annex to the crown of Great Britain, all the territory east of Penobscot river; that she has, besides, officially declared, that she will lay waste and destroy such towns and districts on our coasts as may be assailable. And if this is not sufficient, let us cast our eyes on the depredations committed in the south, as well as those more recently committed in the District of Maine.

Those acts, whilst they demonstrate to us most unequivocally the intentions of our enemy, admonish us to shun dissensions; and to keep constantly in view, that *united we stand, and divided we fall*. If the enemy counts on our internal divisions, we trust that the patriotism of Americans will prove to her, and to the world, that no difference of

opinion exists among us, on the great questions of self-defense, or our existence as a nation. Let each and every one of us, therefore, in this solemn hour of danger, bring forward and deposit on the altar of our country, every passion, every feeling, every prejudice that may tend to awaken resistance, or impair exertion.

Let us, as a united people, come forward in defense of our common country. Let us take efficient measures to learn the duties of the soldier. Let us be prepared, and in constant readiness, to take the field and meet the enemy.

Let us, like the sages of 1776, pledge our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor, for the maintenance of our National Independence; and our enemy will soon learn that the cause of America is the cause of each of its citizens.

To these sentiments your committee flatter themselves there cannot be a dissenting voice; and therefore, propose with confidence, the following resolutions :

Resolved, 1st, That as an extraordinary occasion exists for putting the whole military force of the town into a condition for active and efficient service, the selectmen are instructed forthwith to provide such arms, munitions of war and camp-equipage, as the law has required of towns; and to have the whole ready for immediate use.

Resolved, 2d, That the selectmen be empowered to give liberal aid to the families of such militia as are, or hereafter may be, called into service, who may need assistance; and that the selectmen be charged with that duty.

Resolved, 3d, That we will use our utmost endeavors to increase the number of the militia, to discourage and prevent all evasions, or neglect of duty, that we may ensure to the country, an active and efficient force.

Resolved, 4th, That it be recommended to all exempts, to enroll and form themselves into a company, to equip and prepare themselves for active service.

Resolved, 5th, That we will honestly and sincerely exert ourselves to promote *union, energy and public spirit* among all our fellow-citizens: and we appeal with confidence to our fellow-citizens of the county of Berkshire, and elsewhere, on this trying occasion, and we trust they will rise in their native strength and majesty to defend their country and to repel all invasions.

Signed, Oliver Root, Thomas Melville, Jr., Thomas Gold, James D. Colt, Elkanah Watson, Theodore Hinsdale, Jr., Committee.

The preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted; and one thousand dollars appropriated to carry them into complete effect.

The committee who drafted the resolutions was equally divided, politically: Messrs. Root, Watson and Melville, being

democrats; Messrs. Gold, Colt and Hinsdale, federalists. While all censure of previous action was avoided in the resolutions, it will be observed that, by joining in their passage, the federalists went far beyond a mere approval of such niggardly concessions as Governor Strong made in July, and revoked in September. Both parties seem to have been governed by a common desire for united action in defense of their country. The action of the town was as cordial, and free from mutual upbraidings and recriminations, as though it had come together on the first invasion in a fresh war.

It might have been hoped that the spirit manifested by the federalists on this occasion would, for the future, have disarmed all suspicion of their loyalty. But Governor Strong's revocation of his concession of July, and the preparations for the Hartford convention which went on almost in the presence of the enemy, furnished plausible grounds of accusation; of which the democratic editors and orators were not slow to avail themselves. And the democrats were not alone in expecting treasonable action from the convention. The retailers (of ardent spirits) and taverners of Springfield, at a meeting in the house of Eleazer Williams of that town on the 19th of December, 1814, "deemed it expedient to defer the payment of the (National) duties until after the close of the next session of the Massachusetts legislature." They further determined to call a meeting of the retailers and taverners of the counties of Hampshire, Franklin, and Hampden, at Northampton, December 26th. This meeting was held, and

Resolved, Unanimously, that it is expedient to postpone the payment of any taxes which may have been assessed upon us respectively by the government of the United States, until after the proceedings of the convention now sitting at Hartford, and the doings of the legislature of this commonwealth thereupon, shall have been promulgated, and that we will conduct accordingly.

Resolved, That we feel confident that the legislature of this commonwealth will interpose for our relief, and rescue the resources of the people for self-defense and self-protection.

We find the report of these proceedings in the *Federal Republican*, published at Georgetown, D. C., which credits it to a "Massachusetts newspaper." It is headed: "Beginning to Act." "Temper of old Hampshire." When a considerable number of the citizens of the federal counties of western Massachusetts

publicly expressed expectations like those quoted above, it can hardly be deemed unreasonable or ungenerous suspicion in the majority of the people in the one democratic county, that they attributed treasonable designs to the Hartford convention. The rather lame and impotent conclusion of its consultations justified neither the hopes of its friends, or the fears of its enemies; but that does not prove that either were without reasonable foundation.

At any rate, so jealous was the democratic public sentiment, that, whatever was alleged against the federal leaders—no matter how exaggerated, or in the nature of things, impossible—found believers. The credulity of the democratic masses in this respect, was indeed often ludicrous. We shall soon meet an illustrative incident.

The militia of Massachusetts, as reorganized under the law of 1810, embraced all citizens between the ages of eighteen and forty-five; with the usual exceptions on account of conscientious scruples and official position. In the organization of this body, it was required that each battalion should contain at least one company of grenadiers, light-infantry or riflemen; and that, in each division, should be included at least one company of artillery, and one troop of dragoons.

The artillery, the dragoons, and generally several companies of infantry in each division, consisted of volunteers. These volunteers, or as they were commonly styled, "independent companies," existed under special charters, which, if granted prior to the year 1810, were protected, both by act of congress and by the state law, from abrogation or change, except as a penalty for misconduct. And, not to create invidious distinctions, the charters granted after 1810, were, in practice, held equally sacred.

These privileged corps, as the élite of the citizen-soldiery, aimed at considerable excellence in drill, discipline and deportment. Membership in them involved some expense, as each man was required to furnish his own arms and uniform; and, if in the dragoons, his horse. But it was the only mode in which those liable to militia-duty could, without the payment of fines, avoid being marched through the streets on parade-day as part of a very questionable array. And this fact, together with the martial spirit which still pervaded the community, sufficed to keep the ranks of the volunteer-companies full.

If the strict letter of the law had been enforced, the ordinary militia would have still been a formidable body. For each man was required to provide himself with arms and equipments which were minutely specified; and to appear with them for parade and training four days in the year, besides the annual review, or "general muster" in autumn. It was provided that their uniform should be of dark blue, turned up with such facings, and completed with such hats and caps as the majority of the field officers of each regiment should determine for it.

But in fact, none but the officers ever wore any uniform at all; and not always they. The case of a man "armed and equipped as the law directed" was rare. The vast majority made the whole system of drills and reviews a matter of sport. Being composed of what was left to the current after the better timber for soldiers had been culled for the independent companies, the ununiformed militia obtained the significant sobriquet of "Flood-wood."

And village-wit—which had always a malignant genius in that direction—having blasted it with a nickname, it defied all the power of the Great and General Court to restore it to respectability. If any of the better classes of society appeared in the Flood-wood ranks, it was for one of two opposite reasons. They were either willing to show their indifference, or contempt, for the entire militia-system; or they were ambitious to secure, by the election even of such a rabble-soldiery, the title of captain, with the possibility, through it, of reaching that of the higher military grades, even up to that of general.

Sometimes this ambition was a matter of personal vanity. There was living, very recently, a gentleman who, having, many years ago, in this way obtained the title of general, was, up to the time of his death, seriously offended, if it was omitted even in the direction of a newspaper. But, more often, the title, with the opportunity afforded by the military command for courting popular favor, was sought as an extremely efficient aid in reaching civil office. There was, for many years, hardly a politician of note, who was not addressed by some military title.

There were many serious evils attending the old militia-system, even from the times immediately after the revolution. The elections, even in the independent companies, were always followed by a succession of "treats," which left many in a state of

intoxication; and parades were never conducted on temperance principles. But the same fault could be found with many other occasions to which the same license is not usually so readily accorded; and some regard was generally had by the uniformed soldiery, for their own reputation and that of their corps. The Flood-wood was without this restraint, and also contained most of the class who were habitually lawless; and their excesses were correspondingly great. But, although there were frequent exceptional instances of good conduct and comparative sobriety on the part of individual soldiers, and sometimes of entire companies, yet, as a rule, company elections and "trainings" were occasions of disorder and drunkenness; and "general muster" was the very carnival of riot. On training-days, after the parade—which was preceded by a "treat" from the officers—it was the custom, for the Flood-wood at least, to make the round of the town, firing volleys of musketry before the houses of prominent citizens, who responded to the not unexpected, nor unprovided-for, honor, by alcoholic hospitality. And, often, the final volleys were reserved for the distillery of whiskey and cider-brandy at Luce's mills; with what result need not be told.

The preparations for the general muster were not made without the aid of stimulating beverages; and the arduous duties and labors of that great day of all the year, were sustained by copious draughts from well-filled, and frequently replenished, canteens; a portion of the militiaman's accouterments which was never missed by the inspecting officer, whatever else, from fire-lock to priming-rod, might be lacking. Indeed, it was well if that officer, after duly examining these tin prime-requisites of the military service through a single company, was able to distinguish whether the others carried "Queen's arms" which had seen service at Ticonderoga, in the French and Indian wars, or Lemuel Pomeroy's latest style of flint-lock musket.

This description of the militia of Massachusetts will answer, in its essential particulars, for any period from the close of the revolution until the active militia was reduced to a few small and controllable corps. Whatever good it accomplished was accompanied by an overwhelming flood of evil. It was demoralizing, as well as burdensome, to the community. Instead of making good soldiers, well trained and submissive to discipline, it taught an incontrollable body of armed men to handle dangerous weapons

awkwardly. The office of regimental-surgeon was far from a sinecure in time of peace; and the provision made by the state-law for those wounded, and for the families of those killed, at parades or musters, was not unnecessary. It is startling to read in the papers of that day, the frequent serious and fatal accidents caused by ramrods fired from the guns where the fuddled militiamen had left them; by the bursting of muskets in which the owners had unconsciously accumulated several charges of ammunition before they could persuade the obdurate flints to take effect; and by numerous accidents of a similar character. Even when some capable and zealous officer succeeded in forming a somewhat creditable corps, there were inevitable circumstances which gave it the appearance of the mere affectation of military pomp and pride; and, as the village-wags had inflicted a fatal nickname upon the Flood-wood of the militia, so such satirists as Irving and Paulding made the whole system the victim of their irresistible raillery; and it fell into contempt with the more intelligent classes.

The approach of the war of 1812, however, and still more its actual existence, served to rescue the militia, for a time, from the obloquy into which it had fallen. The democratic leaders, in their opposition to a standing-army, had always affected to place great reliance, in the event of war, upon the efficiency of the militia—the bone and sinew of the country. Experiment showed it to be a very fragile reed; but, before it was put to the proof, as war became more and more imminent, patriotic officers entered enthusiastically into the work of rendering the militia efficient defenders of the country. Nor were these efforts confined to the democrats. In Massachusetts, where the governor refused to surrender the command to the officer assigned to the district by the President, the federalists cherished the citizen-soldiery as, in contrast with the regulars, peculiarly their own; and the legislature made liberal grants—at one time \$100,000—to arm, equip and fit them for service, in defense of the state. In Pittsfield there were two companies of ordinary militia—one at the West Part, and one in the East and Center. There was also an independent company of light-infantry; and, in connection with other towns, one each of cavalry and artillery.

In May, 1810, anticipating the war, the town instructed its assessors to abate all the poll-taxes—except those for the support of the minister—of every militiaman who produced a certificate

from the commander of his company, that he had, for the year preceding, or from the date of his enrollment, attended all the trainings and reviews, completely armed and equipped according to law, and dressed in the uniform prescribed by the proper authority. In the following year, an article was inserted in a warrant for town-meeting, "to see if the town will *explain* the above vote." The town would not; and the democratic selectmen and treasurer, left to their own discretion, if they acted like themselves, construed it liberally in favor of faithful militiamen. The spirited action of the town in September, 1814, regarding its militia, has just been narrated.

Under the fostering influence of the vote of 1810, and by the efforts of competent and zealous officers, the ordinary militia were brought into a very creditable state of efficiency; and the independent corps were greatly improved. When the Cantonment was formed, the militia had the advantage of the example, instruction and encouragement of the officers stationed there, especially when employed as a guard for the prisoners. So that at last when, in the fall of 1814, they were called to more active service, their condition was much in advance of that of peaceful times; and, to some extent, superior to that of the state-militia.

In the work of preparation, the Berkshire Blues, a light-infantry company, under the command of Captain Richard S. Chapell, was distinguished. As soon as news of the declaration of war reached Pittsfield, Captain Chapell ordered his men to provide themselves with arms, equipments and uniforms, within seven weeks: and the order was promptly obeyed. During the entire war the company was kept in a rare state of discipline. Its uniform consisted of dark blue coats turned up with red; pantaloons of the same style; and the tall grenadier cap of leather,—intended for protection against saber-cuts—surmounted by the inevitable plume of black and red.

In the militia-system of that day, positions on the flanks of each regiment, were assigned to independent companies. And, under the order of September 16th, calling out ten thousand of the Massachusetts militia, two flank¹ companies and a regiment of ordinary militia were called from Berkshire. The flank com-

¹The word flank is used in the order as a synonym for independent. Colonel Ward's regiment, to which the Blues were attached, was made up entirely of such companies.

panies selected, were the Berkshire Blues from Pittsfield, and Captain Hunt's company of light-infantry from Stockbridge. The Blues marched on the 11th, and were escorted several miles on their way by "Captain Elisha Allen's company of infantry, and a large concourse of citizens, who cheered them lustily as they separated; the company returning the salute and marching off in high spirits."

The full regiment of seven hundred men, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Solomon H. Chamberlin, of Dalton, marched from Lenox, for Boston, September 15th.

Rev. Billy Hibbard was chaplain of this regiment, and we quote from his autobiography some quaint paragraphs which graphically illustrate some of the feelings and beliefs of the day; and give the only account we have of the Pittsfield militia's "campaign at Boston."

At our annual conference, in 1814, I intimated that I felt it my duty to volunteer my services to supply the army with preaching in all cases where I could; and if the militia should be called out where I traveled, and wanted a chaplain, I should offer to go with them. This matter was talked over; and it was thought right to aid the government, and especially to do all we could to prevent wickedness increasing on account of the war. * * * * *

These were times which tried men's souls. It was important that every man friendly to the general government should show himself and avow his principles. I did not hesitate a moment. Therefore, when the militia was called out to go to Boston, I volunteered my services; and Colonel Chamberlin appointed me chaplain. All was hurry. Orders were given to march forthwith.

Governor Strong had been requested by the President, to call out the number of troops assigned by congress as the quota of Massachusetts, in order to defend Boston from an attack which was threatened by a fleet, and an army of twenty thousand men under the command of Lord Hill.

But Governor Strong, knowing that if he called out these troops by the order from congress, the chief command of them would devolve upon General Dearborn, who commanded the regular troops in Boston; therefore, he called them out by his own order, that he might keep the command in his own hands. I saw by this disobedience that there might be a secret design against the general government. I believed that if Lord Hill should come, Governor Strong might join him and so separate New England from the other states and make himself a king in the land of steady habits. As soon as I had an opportunity, I

opened my mind to the officers of the regiment, and some of them were of my opinion. The colonel declared that the moment he discovered that the governor did not defend the place in case we should be attacked, he would command his regiment to turn their arms upon him.

Our men were in high spirits. I had been ordered to join the regiment on the third day's march. * * The day I started I heard of the defeat of the British at Plattsburg and Baltimore. So, when I overtook the regiment in Ware, and informed them of the news, they gave six cheers, which rent the air.

When we arrived at Boston, we were ordered to encamp at Cambridgeport. This was a wet, sunken place, calculated to give our men remittent fevers. However, our good surgeon, Dr. (Asa) Burbank, succeeded in curing all that were attacked. Our regiment was called out every morning to attend prayers, and we had some solemn seasons. I generally prayed six or eight minutes; and would sometimes exhort them about ten minutes. Sometimes many were in tears, while I was pressing home the duty of the soldier to fear God and serve his country in the midst of war. * * * Our government is of God. * * Let there be no profane swearing; no passions indulged that would violate the decorum of Christian soldiers; but show to all that we fear God and honor our government. After some such short discourse I would close with prayer.

Some of them expressed an opinion that it was needless to have chaplains in an army; but from what I have witnessed, I think, if ministers can do good anywhere, they can in the army, if they are men fearing God, themselves. * * * I believe I was instrumental of some good to the officers and soldiers. * * * Not long after I returned home I had the satisfaction to hear of forty-three, who were in our regiment, who had experienced religion, and joined our society. I met with no abuse either from soldiers or sailors, while with them. But, such was the habit of speaking evil of the president and congress, that I met with several insults from gentlemen of those habits. One instance of insult happened on parade. A gentleman, who often attended prayers outside the hollow square, came to me while I was waiting for the regiment to form; and the invalids were also standing near me. He came to make some acquaintance; he asked my name, and whether I was educated at Cambridge college, etc. He remarked that "our country was once flourishing, but now it is wretched, and all by our damned rulers." I said, "Sir, our rulers are not damned." "Yes," said he, "they are damned rulers." I said, "Sir, you insult me. No man that is acquainted with me, will treat me with vulgarity, nor curse the rulers of our land in my presence; it is written, thou shalt not curse the rulers of thy people." He said: "If I have hurt

your feelings, I am sorry for it. I meant *Madison*." I said, "I feel myself insulted by you, and I owe you no conversation." He steered off without another word. At a proper time I made my complaint to the officers of the staff. I told them I could not hear the rulers of our land cursed, without resenting it. There was such an interest taken in my behalf by the officers and soldiers, that soon it was noised about that the chaplain had been insulted; and it became the subject of much conversation. Some concluded, by way of apology, that the gentleman would not have made so free in my presence if he had not supposed that I was a chaplain of the same political sentiments of the clergy in general, of New England. If so, what an account will those clergymen have to give who have encouraged the people in cursing the rulers of our land. Verily, this has been the cause of this war, and of all the blood which has been shed. *O Tempora! O Mores!* * * * * * Colonel Chamberlin sent word to the governor, that his regiment was ready for service; or to march down to Castine, to drive off the British.¹

I was requested also to inform those members of the assembly then sitting in Boston, who came from that part of Maine in which the British troops lay, that our regiment was waiting for orders to march down and drive them off. And they petitioned Governor Strong for a suitable force of volunteers for that purpose. But our pious governor loved our enemies so well, that he would not have them hurt or disturbed. So he advised neutrality, and preached peace with all but republicanism: I did not hear of his preaching any peace with that.

It will be observed that these opinions were recorded by Mr. Hibbard, as though still held by him, nearly forty years after the close of the war. If a man so shrewd and well-informed as he, could entertain for such a period suspicions such as he expresses, it is difficult to conceive of any charge against the federal leaders which would not have found credence among the less intelligent masses of the democratic party.

The militia remained at Boston three months, no-doubt learning something of the art of war; and certainly seeing as much of metropolitan life as was good for them. If they did not see any active service it was clearly from no lack of inclination. And if they had met the enemy in fight, there is every reason to believe that they would have maintained the reputation which Berkshire soldiers have kept unsullied in all the wars in which they have taken part.

¹ There was the old impatient Berkshire spirit of revolutionary times.

The war had hardly commenced before there were rumors of negotiations for peace or of mediation proffered by neutral powers. But, while both the belligerents constantly declared their desire for peace, no terms were ever suggested by the one which the other would even consider. Finally, however, in the winter of 1813-14, the United States appointed commissioners to treat concerning peace, who met the commissioners of Great Britain in August, 1814, at Ghent. The first news from this commission came in October. Great Britain, rendered arrogant by the splendid success of her arms in all parts of the world, presented terms, which hardly the most devoted of her partisans in America would have consented to accept. Almost the whole body of the people applauded the course of their commissioners in rejecting them; and resolved to fight out the war at any cost rather than to submit to such insolent demands. They were simply these:

Great Britain insisted on retaining that portion of Maine already in her possession; upon excluding Americans from the fisheries to which they had been admitted by the treaty of 1783; and that the United States should agree never to construct or maintain any armed vessels on the lakes, nor hold or erect any forts on their American shores, or on the rivers that ran into them. She demanded, moreover, not only that her Indian allies should be included in the treaty of peace, to which the United States was willing to consent; but that there should be ceded, and secured, to them forever, all the territory now included in the states of Michigan, Indiana and Illinois, with a part of Ohio.

This news, of course, put the expectation of peace far from the thoughts of both government and people; and, although the commission at Ghent was known to be still continuing its labors, they nerved themselves at once for a desperate struggle with that vast power which Great Britain, having crushed with it the greatest soldier in Europe, was now able to concentrate upon them.

There were many reasons why both political parties should seriously regret this necessity. The federalists, of course, as an original peace party; the democrats from the embarrassments which they experienced in conducting the government; and both, from the alarming dangers to which every one perceived that the country was exposed. And the state of the war was not such as to relieve this depression; although we now see that it had just developed officers capable of command, and although the brilliant

victories on the Niagara frontier somewhat cheered the gloom. There were great fears as to the result of the invasion of Louisiana. A large portion of Maine was still held by a British army ready to extend its conquests in the spring. Canada, still intact, was the rallying ground of a constantly increasing force. The brilliant series of American naval victories, which distinguished the opening of the war, had ended, and the ships whose names had become a synonym for victory were either lost or hopelessly shut up in port, by fleets which effectually blockaded the whole coast of the Union. The slave-holding states were agitated by perpetual alarms; for the enemy—although his own position as a slave-holding power, by virtue of his West Indian possessions, restrained him from openly encouraging insurrections and arming the blacks—made frequent landings, incited escapes from servitude, and committed other acts which were deemed suggestive of a servile outbreak. The northern commercial states were threatened with the plunder and destruction of their maritime towns and villages, while the almost-impervious squadrons of the blockade completed the ruin of their commerce.

The desperate struggle which seemed inevitable was, doubtless, even under these depressing circumstances, to be accepted, without hesitation, as the alternative of a dishonorable peace; and, in the light of after events, we can confidently believe, that, with much suffering and sacrifice, it would have been brought, by a united nation, to a successful issue. But even with this assurance, it was not a contest to be courted; and in the autumn of 1814, victory at New Orleans was uncertain; the course of the federal party was not well assured, and the Hundred Days of Napoleon could not have been even remotely anticipated.

The intelligence which came in February, that the protocol for a treaty of peace upon honorable terms—although no definite mention was made of some important matters in dispute—had been agreed upon by the commissioners at Ghent, ratified by the prince regent at London, and forwarded to Washington for ratification there, was well fitted to excite the universal and exuberant joy with which it was received.

The news reached Pittsfield on the afternoon of February 13th, in the form of a small handbill of twenty newspaper-lines; which had been issued at five o'clock the preceding afternoon, from the office of the *Albany Argus*, and which was immediately reprinted

by the *Sun*, and distributed broadcast. It merely stated the general facts, and that the news had been received in Albany, at the moment of the date of the *Argus* handbill, by Governor Tompkins, to whom it had been dispatched by J. Barker, Esq., from New York. But there was no doubt of the essential facts, and the public joy was unbounded. The *Sun*, of the same week, says: "On Tuesday, the artillery at the Cantonment, and in this village, repeatedly fired salutes; a large number of citizens, and a fine body of regulars, paraded on the green, and fired continued volleys of musketry through the day. It was a scene of rejoicing in which the loud music of the bells, and the roar of artillery and musketry, were but outward demonstrations of the joy which animated every patriot breast."

In its issue of March 2d, the *Sun* again says: "The nation is alive with the welcome news of peace. This town, and almost all the cities, towns and villages throughout the Union, so far as heard from, have given testimony of their joyous feelings by discharges of cannon, ringing of bells, illuminations, etc."

In Pittsfield, there were illuminations, bonfires, public dinners, and—most notable among them—a ball at the assembly-room in the second story of the old yellow Female Academy on Bank row; on which joyous occasion the belles were indeed happy who could appear in a robe of blue calico, covered with innumerable scrolls inscribed with the word PEACE; a style of dress-pattern of which Josiah Bissell & Son could procure but a limited supply for the Pittsfield market; although cargoes had been sent out from Liverpool, almost simultaneously with the ship which brought the treaty of peace—so close upon the withdrawal of the British armies, followed the invasion of British manufactures.

The *Sun*, in announcing the ratification of the treaty by the American government, warned its readers that the peace had been forced upon Great Britain, "who still rankled with commercial jealousy," and that the United States "must be prepared for a second Punic war;" and, with other newspapers of the same political faith it for years cultivated a hostile feeling towards England, and affected to consider the assent to peace as wrung from her. But, although the softening of the terms offered by her between October and December was doubtless in some measure due to a growing perception that her preponder-

ance in Europe was not fixed on so impregnable a basis as in the first flush of victory she imagined, yet it cannot be fairly claimed that she consented to peace from dread of the American arms. Peace was a blessed boon to both countries, neither of which could, by any possibility, have gained from the prolongation of hostilities, anything at all commensurate with the cost; and it was the glory of the American commissioners at Ghent, that they succeeded in convincing the representatives of Great Britain that this was true as to her interests.

Still, although the people of Pittsfield, like those of the whole country, were relieved of many burdens and anxieties by the advent of peace, and although the joyous greeting with which they met it, was not without wise reasons, yet the cessation of hostilities was far from favorable to their immediate material interests. The stoppage of the national expenditure, to a great extent, diminished both the mercantile and manufacturing business of the town: and the abundance and cheapness of the British fabrics with which the whole country was flooded, threatened to complete their ruin.

This, the town soon began to feel bitterly; and it was the opinion of the veteran Britain haters—and, like most of their opinions, not altogether unsupported by at least presumptive proof—that the English manufacturers, unable to protect their monopoly either by preventing the extension of their improvements in machinery, or to crush their rivals by force of arms, had determined to effect their destruction by a free use of their unlimited capital; even a wasteful temporary use of which could be wisely made, if it succeeded in driving their American rivals from their own market. In what manner they acted, on the basis of this opinion, will appear in another chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DIVIDED PARISH—PASTORATES OF REV. WILLIAM ALLEN AND
REV. THOMAS PUNDERSON—REUNION.

[1810-1817.]

Divorce of town and parish affairs—Temporary change in the mode of supporting public worship—Ordination of Rev. William Allen—The town appropriates moneys for a school-fund—Misapplication of the same to the purposes of the First Parish, and controversy concerning the same—The First Church continues the discipline of its seceding members—Measures looking towards reunion, and obstacles to them—Death and benevolent will of Woodbridge Little—The fathers of the church characterized by Rev. Dr. Humphrey—Rev. Messrs Allen and Punderson propose reunion, and resign to facilitate it—Their dismissal—The churches agree upon a basis of reunion—It is consummated under the auspices of an ecclesiastical council.

WE resume the history of the Congregational parishes of the town, at the point where it was interrupted on the death of Rev. Thomas Allen, in 1811, and shortly after the establishment of the Union Parish. For seven years after the death of Mr. Allen, religious worship in Pittsfield was supported in a manner then almost, if not entirely, anomalous in the country-towns of Massachusetts; there being no appropriations of money by the town for that purpose.

Practically, perhaps, this change may be said to have been effected in October, 1809, when the town voted "that the sum of four hundred dollars shall be raised for the support of the ministry; which, together with the expense of assessing the same, shall be assessed exclusively on the polls and estates of those persons who are members of the First Parish in Pittsfield, and be paid over to such uses as they shall appoint." While, to comply with the statute, the town thus voted that the sum which would fall to the members of the First Parish, to be paid for religious

purposes, by the assessors' books should be raised, they remitted to them the payment and expenditure of the money; thus virtually dissolving the connection between the town and the parish.

This, and other votes of the town, confirming and perpetuating the separation of town and church and producing very nearly an equality of the parishes before the law, was probably the result of a union between the federal voters in the Union Parish and the democrats among the Methodists and Baptists, with the aid of a few Episcopalians; for there was a considerable democratic majority in the town, taking all denominations together.

After this vote of October, the members left in the First Parish after the secession of those who were incorporated into the Union Parish, were organized as a religious society; but it was not incorporated, such a step not being necessary, as it retained the vested rights of the original town-parish. It must not, however, be confounded with the present First Parish, which, although its successor, is that of the Union Parish as well. On the 10th of August, 1810, the First Church chose Rev. William Allen to succeed his father in the pastorate, and, the parish concurring, he was duly installed; Rev. Joseph Eckly, D. D., of Boston, preaching the sermon.

There is no statement anywhere of the amount of Mr. Allen's salary; indeed all the knowledge we have of the financial affairs of the First Parish during his ministry, is afforded by the record of the town's action concerning the unwarranted payment to him, by Capt. John Dickinson, the town-treasurer, of certain funds which had been appropriated to the support of schools; both the treasurer and the minister probably deeming the vote illegal and void. We give an abstract of the town's action.

On the 5th of November, 1810, the following preamble and resolution were adopted, in pursuance of the policy indicated by the vote already quoted as having passed in October, 1809:

Whereas, the principal part of the avails of the ministry-lands, which have been sold by the town, and all the avails of the school-lot, sold to Ebenezer White and others, have been appropriated to the building of a meeting-house, now in possession of the Congregational society, of which the Rev. William Allen is pastor, and is now held for their use; and whereas, it appears that the town did raise by tax, and appropriate, other moneys to build that meeting-house—to the amount of more than six thousand dollars: Therefore, voted, that moneys owing this town,

secured by note, bond, mortgage, or other security, and payable with annual interest, be, and the same hereby are, appropriated as a fund, the interest of which shall be annually appropriated to defray the expenses of the schools in the several school-districts of this town.

In the warrant for a town-meeting held in November, 1814, was the following article relative to a violation of the above vote :

To see if the town will choose a committee to ascertain whether the treasurer of the town has paid six hundred dollars—more or less—to the use of the First Parish in Pittsfield, or their teacher of piety, morality, and religion, out of the moneys derived from the debt which the late Rev. Thomas Allen owed the town, and which moneys the town had voted should be put out permanently on annual interest, and the annual interest be applied to the use of schools in said town; and to pass such votes upon their report as the exigency of the case may require, to effect the purposes of the town in their said vote, and in preserving said fund, and the faithful application of it to the use of schools.

The consideration of this article was postponed to the March meeting of 1815; and the hearing of the report from the usual annual committee appointed in the previous year to settle with the treasurer, was deferred to the same time. When the March meeting came, the hearing of the auditing committee's report was again postponed until April, and then to May. In May it was not read; and the choice of a new committee to settle with the treasurer of the year then ensuing, was indefinitely postponed. Nothing was done by either meeting in regard to the alleged use of the town's funds in contravention of its express vote; but John Dickinson, who had been treasurer since 1812, was re-elected in 1815, and also chosen representative in the legislature. It is evident that the democratic majority in the town, now become very large, had determined, without rescinding the vote of 1810, to sustain their treasurer in his non-compliance with it. It was not until March 11, 1816, that the report of the committee to examine the treasurer's accounts, bearing date, November 7, 1814, finally obtained a hearing. The following are the closing paragraphs :

" Your committee find that said treasurer has opened an account current with the First Parish in Pittsfield, which he has exhibited to

us, and in which he charges himself with the sum of \$886 69, collected of the town's debtors, as follows, to wit:

The whole debt due on the note of the late Rev. Mr. Allen, . . .	\$112 17
[Being the principal and interest of the note for \$87, reported as found in the treasurer's hands after Mr. Allen's death.]	
Debt of the late Deacon Hubbard,	97 35
Debt of Robert Stanton,	193 61
Part of debt of E. Tracy,	355 00
Part of debt of Isaac Ward,	128 50
	<hr/>
	\$886 63

And, in the same account, said treasurer charges that parish with the sum of \$971 83, as paid by him to the Rev. William Allen, on account of his settlement with them as their minister: by which it appears that the said treasurer considered it his duty to pay the same, and deemed himself legally entitled to be indemnified, out of the debt of Erastus Tracy, for the balance.

Signed, JOHN B. ROOT,
JOHN C. WILLIAMS,
JOSHUA DANFORTH.

Messrs. Root and Danforth were active members of the First Parish, Mr. Williams of the Union parish; so that the substance of their report must have been familiar to every citizen, soon after it was prepared: and probably its details also. It is certain, therefore, that the information contained in it—of a nature so interesting to the excited politico-religious factions of the day—was the subject of animated discussion. In town-meeting, especially—although the majority for two years refused to permit it to be formally communicated—it could not have failed to excite vigorous debate.¹

The report of the committee having, at last, then, in 1816, obtained a hearing, the treasurer's account as to ordinary town-chargès, was allowed; but it was voted, "that Thomas Gold, Esq., Deacon Samuel Root, and Mr. Thomas Hubbard, be a committee to settle with Mr. John Dickinson, the town-treasurer, respecting the sum paid by him to the Rev. William Allen, and, if he does not settle with them, that they be, and hereby are, appointed agents, in behalf of the town, to bring an amicable suit on the bond of the said John Dickinson and his sureties."

No satisfactory settlement with the treasurer being effected,

¹No inference to the contrary can be drawn from the silence of the record, where neither discussions, nor abortive motions, were ever mentioned.

suit was commenced as directed, in the court of common pleas, the declaration alleging the wrongful payment by Captain Dickinson, to Rev. Mr. Allen, in the year 1814, of sums amounting to \$1,121.80, and a debt due from him to the town, including this sum, of \$1,500. The defendant demurred to the declaration as insufficient in some legal point, in which he was sustained by the court.

The town thereupon, by its attorney, Thomas Gold, appealed to the supreme court, in which the case was brought forward at the April term of 1816, and the First Parish requesting to be joined, as a party in the suit, with the defendant, permission was granted, and the case continued to the next term; and then still further, to the September term, 1817.

In the meantime, at the March town-meeting of 1817—four months after measures for the reunion of the two parishes had been initiated, there was an article in the warrant :

To see whether the town will pass a vote to notify the attorney employed by the town to institute a suit against the First Congregational Society in said town for moneys alleged to have been made use of by said society for the settlement of Rev. William Allen, belonging to the school-fund of the town, to withdraw the prosecution.

No action upon this proposition is recorded, but the reunion having been perfected, and it being desirable that all causes of difference between those who had been members of the late parishes should be speedily removed, the following was submitted to a meeting, August 14th :

To see whether the town will agree to refer by rule of court, the suit now pending against John Dickinson, together with all demands subsisting between the town and the *late* First Parish thereof, so that all disputes between the town and parish may at once be decided, under this rule. And that the said Dickinson may have the benefit, by way of offset, or otherwise, under the same, of any claims which the said First Parish may have against the town.

This proposition was adopted; and it was further voted, that "the town consents that the Hon^{ble} William Walker of Lenox, the Hon^{ble} Ezra Starkweather of Worthington, and the Hon^{ble} Joseph Woodbridge of Stockbridge, be the referees," and that "the agents of the town, appointed at a former meeting, be hereby directed to act accordingly."

These agents were Jonathan Allen, Henry H. Childs and John B. Root, all democrats, and members of the defendant parish; who had been substituted for the previous committee, two members of which were federalists and members of Union Parish.

At the September term of the supreme court, the above action of the town was submitted to it, and ratified by the appointment of Messrs. Walker, Starkweather and Woodbridge as referees; and at the same term the award of these gentlemen, "that neither party should recover or pay anything, either debt or costs," was returned, and declared final.

This is the last we hear of this remarkable transaction, or series of transactions, except a vote passed by the town, October 19, 1819, appointing the selectmen, together with Colonel Danforth and Phineas Allen, to make a proper allowance to Thomas Gold for his services, and for money advanced by him in commencing and prosecuting the suit against the parish. We learn of no protest by the members of Union Parish against the apparent injustice of the town's action. Probably in the era of good feeling which attended the reunion of the parishes, there was no disposition to keep alive any of the old dissensions.

But before the happy era, consummated by this settlement, there had been obstacles to overcome of a more serious and delicate character than that which arose from the misapplication of a few hundred dollars of the town's money, in a manner which was not likely to be used as a precedent. The measures of discipline, commenced, before the death of Rev. Thomas Allen, against the members of the First Church, who had left it to connect themselves with that of Union Parish, were resumed on the 28th of February, 1810—only seventeen days after his decease. At the meeting of the First Church on that day, although only seven members—Deacon James Hubbard, James Hubbard, Jr., Captain Daniel Sackett, George Butler, Amos Delano, Josiah Lawrence and Daniel Foote—were present, it was unanimously voted that Woodbridge Little, Joseph Fairfield, Nathaniel Fairfield, Zebediah Stiles, Charles Goodrich, Captain Nathaniel Tremain, Timothy Cadwell, Deacon Daniel Chapman, Isaac Tremain and Richard Barnard, should be suspended from their communion for the space of six months; and then, still remaining unrepentant, suffer excommunication. A similar vote was passed concerning Charles Goodrich, Jr., Timothy Haskell, and Jonathan Weston. The

time allowed for repentance was afterwards extended to September 25th, on which day—two weeks before the ordination of Rev. William Allen—the sentence of excommunication was made absolute.

On the 25th of the next month, eight of the persons excommunicated tendered the following confession :

To the Church of the First Parish in Pittsfield :

We, the subscribers, do voluntarily and cheerfully confess that, IN THE MANNER OF OUR LEAVING YOU, "we are chargeable both with error in judgment and irregularity in practice" (*agreeable to the opinions of the two ecclesiastical councils which have been convened in this place, and which have attended to our difficulties*). *This acknowledgment, which we consider ourselves as having made to you on the 23d of October last, we again frankly make, and ask, not only the Divine forgiveness, but also yours, and that of every person who has been offended thereby.*

A confession differing from the above only in the omission of the words printed in italics—was signed by Messrs. Tremain, Stiles, Haskell and the Goodriches. Upon this confession, the First Church pronounced the following decision :

* * * We should have been glad if the confession had been more precise and definite ; yet, considering the circumstances of the case, remembering that the confession followed the sentence of excommunication which had been passed upon them, we must think that by "the manner of their leaving us," they mean the irregularity in departing from us for which they have been disciplined.

A majority of the above-mentioned persons have said in their confession of October 23, 1809, that "the course which they have pursued did not originate in any disaffection to the church." We are fully sensible that the church gave them no just occasion for their secession from it; and that their conduct has been irreconcilable with gospel rules and contrary to the gospel spirit. They "acknowledge that, in the manner of their leaving us they are chargeable both with error in judgment and irregularity in practice (agreeable to the opinion of the two ecclesiastical councils, which have been convened in this place, and which have attended to our difficulties.)" Whatever may have been the opinion of the first council, whose result has never been presented to us, there can be no doubt respecting that of the second, with whose result a compliance is professed. This council declared, that the censured members, above-named, "had violated their covenant engagements with the church"—that "the manner of their withdrawing was irregular, and not according with the gospel rule," and that they had not

"made Christian satisfaction to the church for withdrawing from them." If the confession of the persons referred to, relates, as they say, to the irregularity pointed out by the council, then they confess that they have violated their solemn covenant engagements with us. In this light, we must view the confession of all the above-named persons; and it is only in this light that we are disposed to view it with any complacency.

We believe that, in order fully to discharge their duty, they are under obligation to return to our communion. But, although they at present neglect to return to us, yet, as they express their penitence for the irregular manner in which they left us, we trust that our Congregational churches will not censure us as abandoning the wholesome discipline of the gospel, if, on account of their professed repentance, we take off the sentence of excommunication. This we now do. We can not, however, adopt this measure without explicitly declaring our belief that the foundation of the church with which they have connected themselves, was laid in error and irregularity.

We are still ready to restore these persons to our communion, and receive them into the church, if they should return to us, declaring that they take upon themselves again their former covenant.

With this rather forced construction of, and decidedly ungracious response to, the humble admission of their fault, the gentlemen named were left for five years, in the course of which Mr. Little and Captain Goodrich died, and the country passed through a war, and much political commotion. The confession "of twenty-one females, members of the (First) church," who had joined that of Union Parish was rejected "as equivocal—although it was not charged to be designedly so"—inasmuch as it did not expressly declare their penitence for the faults which they admitted. But, in June, 1815, sixteen of these ladies signed a paper similar to that of the male seceders in 1810; and met with a similar response. At the same meeting in which this action was taken, it was voted unanimously "that we are ready to restore to our communion those members of the church of Union Parish who were formerly members of this church, and to renew with them our covenant; and also to receive into our fellowship all the other members of the church of Union Parish, if they will unite in the same covenant."

In its terms this proposition was but a small advance upon that with which the action of the First Church in 1810, closed. But the hindrances which had obstructed reunion, were slowly giving

way ; and, twenty-five days after this last vote, the following declaration was adopted by the First Church ; and, if still ungracious in tone, it shows a marked advance towards the conciliation which was a necessary preliminary to the consolidation of the Congregationalists of Pittsfield upon the old basis.

Whereas, several years ago, certain members of this church were, in violation of their covenant, in a hasty and irregular manner, without dismission and without necessity, embodied into the church of Union Parish in this town, being a majority of said church of Union Parish ;—and whereas, they have presented to us a written confession of their faults acknowledging that they *have done wrong*—we have taken the same, with attending circumstances into serious consideration. We think that the offending members would more fully observe the rules of ecclesiastical order, and discharge their duty, by returning to the church from which they have departed ; especially as they are generally convinced that but one religious society is required in this village.¹ Yet, as they consider themselves bound by their new covenant, by which they are connected with others never belonging to this church, and as they profess repentance of their sin in leaving us in an irregular manner ; Now, therefore, although retaining our persuasion that “ the foundation of the church of Union Parish, was laid in error and irregularity,” yet influenced by the desire of promoting the interests of the gospel of peace, we think ourselves allowed to vote, and we do hereby vote, that we will hereafter overlook, in our measures of discipline, the offense which has been acknowledged, and that hereafter we will treat the church of Union Parish as a Christian church.

From the beginning of the rupture, both parties made the strongest protestation of their desire to prevent a division of the parish ; and, after that had become an accomplished fact, each was vehement in proclaiming its willingness to take any steps which could reasonably be required of it, toward reconciliation and reunion ; but each unfortunately held that the terms proposed by the other were inadmissible ; and, indeed it was true, that what each required was very like an unconditional surrender of the very point upon which the other had set its heart. But the protestations were none the less strong on that account. It was to emphasize its professions of a desire for harmony that the new parish assumed the name of Union. The adherents of the

¹The ignoring of the Methodist and Baptist societies in all the action regarding religious matters during these troubles is noteworthy and suggestive.

First Church retorted that the seceders adopted a strange method of manifesting their desire for union when they drew a fixed line of separation, and set up, behind it, a new organization with all the elements of permanence which it was in their power to provide.

The latter portion of this retort was, however, not strictly true; for, while the Union Parish included among its members, Woodbridge Little, Oliver Wendell, Charles Goodrich, John Chandler Williams, Lemuel Pomeroy, and other of the wealthier citizens, and thus had abundant means for the erection of a meeting-house, immediately upon its organization, it actually delayed that measure for more than a year; either in the sincere hope that a reconciliation would render it unnecessary, or else to avoid the odium of being first in assuming that reunion was no longer to be hoped for.¹

With the exception of the ordination of its minister, and the building of its meeting-house, we have no positive information of any act of Union Parish during the seven years of its existence. One event, nevertheless, of permanent interest to both parishes, after their reunion, occurred during this period. Woodbridge Little died on the 21st of June, 1813, and by his will left five hundred dollars for the purpose of establishing a fund of which the interest should be "yearly appropriated toward the salary of the Congregational minister in Union Parish;" recommending that it should be placed in the care of trustees. To this request, he added the following provision: "And, as it has ever been my sincere and ardent desire to prevent the causes, and avoid the consequences, of the unhappy division which has taken place in the Congregational church in this town, and which has issued in the establishment of Union Parish; so, if at any time, a union shall be effected between the two societies, on principles of Chris-

¹In the winter of 1810-11, Union Parish finally determined to build a house of worship; and, a liberal sum having been subscribed for that purpose, the town was asked, not to give, but to sell for a suitable consideration, a site "north of the printing-office of Phineas Allen," on what was then the burial-ground, although as yet unoccupied by graves. The democrats being in majority, this request was refused, and the new house of worship was built, where the South Congregational Church now stands, on South street. It was a neat, tasteful and convenient structure, with a rather graceful spire, and was supplied with a bell. After the reunion of the parishes, it served a good purpose as a lecture and school room.

tian charity, and they become in fact one society and church, then said sum should be given to the united parishes."

After making liberal legacies to several friends and giving one hundred dollars to the Congregational Missionary Society, Mr. Little's will provided that his property should be sold within twelve months after his decease; and what remained after the payment of legacies, and the cost of erecting a monument at his grave, should be paid to the president and trustees of Williams college; to be added to the fund created by him in 1811, for the purpose of aiding indigent young men in their preparation for the ministry. The amount of Mr. Little's gift in 1811, was twenty-five hundred dollars; and, as residuary legatee under the will, the college received thirty-two hundred dollars. These were the first donations which the college received after it commenced its corporate existence.

Mr. Little's bequest to the Congregational parish did not become available until the year 1818, when his earnest prayer for its reunion had been answered. At a subsequent period his suggestion regarding its committal was heeded; and it became the nucleus of the fund for the support of the Congregational ministry in Pittsfield. Mr. Little was buried in the old First burial ground; but, after two disinterments, his grave is now in the "Pilgrims' Rest," at the Pittsfield cemetery. For four years after his death, the divided parishes struggled on; wrangling almost to the last. But, all along, a restless feeling that neither was altogether in the right, possessed the best minds in both. As time wore on, this consciousness extended and increased in power; and they looked and prayed longingly for the moment which would give them the opportunity to mingle once more in a common fold.

No one ever pretended that the number of Congregational worshippers in Pittsfield was such as to require two parishes of that order in town; nor was their wealth so abundant that the burden of a superfluous establishment could be disregarded. In the heat of conflict, indeed, men subscribed, without hesitation and without stint, for the support of whatever institutions seemed essential to the maintenance of their rights and privileges, or to the honor of their party; but when the conflict was in some measure past, and the necessity arising from it had become at least doubtful, all naturally began to look about for some honor-

able method of relieving themselves from a useless and wasteful expense.

And, more than this, no one could fail to see, that two churches of the same denomination of Christians, existing side by side—in a temper perpetually hostile to each other, and constantly bandying accusations of unfaithfulness to covenant vows, and of contempt for the directions left by the Head of the Church for its governance—were bringing disgrace upon the whole order with which they were connected, and dishonoring the great name they had taken upon themselves. Every one perceived that such an antagonism was an evil second only to that of a perpetual contention between brethren in the same church.

This evil had, from its beginning, been felt and deplored by Christians throughout Massachusetts, and in the adjoining states; for the scandal had become wide-spread, and concerned all. Nor was it more deeply and sincerely lamented by any than by the pious fathers of the Pittsfield church, who, nevertheless, subject to human frailties, suffered their passions and prejudices to thwart their own earnest purpose to terminate it.

Those who remember the fathers of Pittsfield as characterized by Rev. Dr. Humphrey will readily conceive how such a generation might be long kept divided upon a point which a succession of exceptional circumstances, morbidly contemplated, had magnified beyond its due importance; and it is still easier to comprehend how surely and firmly they would unite, when once convinced that the aims in which they agreed were altogether paramount to the points upon which they differed.

That conviction began to dawn upon the minds of the opposing political factions among the Pittsfield Congregationalists, as soon as the termination of the war of 1812-15 permitted the heated passions, which had accompanied and preceded it, to cool. With the return of peace, the political issues of the previous quarter of a century, and the heated debates which they had elicited, became little more than a troubled dream; a haunting and an annoyance still, but with little real substance. The era of good feeling did not fully dawn, but the light of its coming had began to break; and, under its influence, men began to perceive that many things which they had mistaken for demons and monsters, were but ugly and unsubstantial phantoms of the night. And, with the

advancing day, even the most obdurate of feuds—those of neighborhoods and small communities—began to give way.

In the June, following the return of peace, the First Church passed its earliest vote looking—with hesitation, it is true,—toward reconciliation with that of Union Parish. There was unhappily apparent in this vote, and in that following it, an effort, by a forced construction of the language used by the seceding members in their confession, to magnify their acknowledgment of guilt; and also a repulsive assumption of superiority; by which their invitations were rendered nugatory. But the desire for reunion continued to increase among the people, and found nothing to check its growth, except bitter memories, which time and death had already much abated; and excepting also the existence of two distinct churches, each with a pastor to whom it was, with good reason, devotedly attached.

To these ministers therefore it fell, to take the initiative in measures which would, of necessity, be painful to themselves, and, for a time at least, derogatory to their temporal interests. This sacrifice, Mr. Allen, in a spirit of noble self-forgetfulness and devotion to the good of his people, was the first to make,¹ by presenting to his church the following paper:

To the First Church and Parish of Pittsfield:

The subscriber, who has been, for the last six years, your minister, with many proofs of your attachment, has often deplored the unhappy effects of the division of the town into two religious societies, and wished that they might be reunited. To facilitate the attainment of this object, he has made some exertions, particularly in respect to a settlement of the difficulty between the churches. The great obstacle of the communion of the two churches having been for some time past removed, and other circumstances appearing to him to be at the present moment more favorable to a union than they have ever before been, the subscriber deems it his duty earnestly to recommend, to the people of his charge, an effort to combine harmoniously the two churches and parishes into one. For the accomplishment of this object, which he thinks is important both to the interests of religion and to the tem-

¹One tradition has it that, before Mr. Allen took this course, he had a friendly interview with Rev. Mr. Punderson, at which both pastors agreed to recommend to their respective churches and parishes, a reunion upon the ancient basis, and to tender their resignations on condition that this advice should be adopted. It is very probable that this natural course was pursued; but the record indicates that the contrary was the fact.

poral prosperity of the town, he hereby expresses—what he has often declared to individuals—his readiness to be dismissed from his pastoral office.

WILLIAM ALLEN.

PITTSFIELD, November 12, 1816.

This communication was laid before the church on the 13th; and "a disposition to comply with its recommendations," say the records, "was unanimously expressed by the members present;" a committee consisting of Deacons Crofoot and Maynard—who had always been somewhat favorably disposed toward Union Parish—Messrs. Daniel Foot, James Hubbard, and Ebenezer Burt, was appointed to confer, on the subject of union, with any committee which might be appointed on the part of the church of the other parish.

Mr. Allen's letter and the proceedings of the First Church thereon, were communicated to Rev. Mr. Punderson, through Hon. John Chandler Williams, and by him laid before a full meeting of the church of Union Parish, on the 18th of November, together with the following paper, signed by himself:

To the Church of Christ in Union Parish, Pittsfield:

The subscriber, being apprised that much is said at the present time with regard to a union between the two churches and societies in this place, and having learned what has been done by the other church and its pastor, in reference to this object, feels it incumbent upon him in this way to express his desire that it may be clearly and distinctly understood by all parties concerned, that he wishes not to be considered a barrier toward the accomplishment of the proposed union.

Could the two churches and societies become cordially united into one, it is his deliberate opinion, that it would be greatly for the interests of religion, and for the prosperity of the town; and he shall heartily approve of any attempt that shall be made to accomplish so desirable an object.

He feels indeed that, in leaving a people with whom he has ever lived in such perfect harmony, to whom he has so long broken the bread of life, a people who have so warm a place in his affections, from whom he has received so many tokens of friendship and esteem, and from whom he can have no worldly inducement to be separated, he will have to make no small sacrifice of feeling, if not of interest. Still, this sacrifice he is ready to make, should it be thought that the interest of religion, and the good of this people, require it.

THOMAS PUNDERSON.

These papers having been laid before it, the church voted that

it was sincerely disposed to make an effort for the harmonious combination of the two churches and parishes; and for that purpose, appointed Hon. J. C. Williams, Deacon Daniel Chapman, and Captain Tremain, a committee to confer with that of the First Church. The joint committee thus constituted, agreed upon the following basis of union:

First. That the male members of each church, living in town, should express their readiness, to fellowship all the members of the other church, who might be in regular standing.

Second. That the members of the two churches should have a separate vote in the choice of the first minister of the united society; and that a majority, consisting of at least two-thirds of the members of each church, present, should be necessary to the settlement of said minister.

These terms were promptly accepted by the First Church, and it immediately took measures to carry them into effect by voting,

First. That, as all the male members of this church, living in town, excepting two, have expressed their readiness to fellowship all the members of the other church who are in regular standing, Mr. James Hubbard be a committee to inquire of the said two members whether they also can fellowship the members of the other church, and that he report to the moderator.

Second. That, for the purpose of union, we are willing that our pastor should be dismissed at such a time as may be mutually agreed upon by him and the parish; and that Deacon Maynard be a committee to act with a committee of the parish in calling, if it should be found necessary, a mutual council for the dismissal of our pastor, and the completion of the proposed union.

The church of Union Parish—apparently not quite so well prepared for action—voted, that “in accordance with the spirit of the report, Deacons Goodrich and Chapman and Nathaniel Tremain be a committee to converse with all the members of this church, and to inquire of them whether they have any objection against any of the members of the church in the First Parish in this town, so that they should be unwilling to have the two churches united into one.”

On the 23d of December, this committee reported that, “although they found universally expressed a strong reluctance to the dismissal of their beloved pastor, yet all would consent to

the union of the churches on such terms as the brethren of Union Church should think proper."

Upon this the church unanimously voted to fellowship that of the First Parish; and, as the excepted two members of the First Church waived their objections, if they had any, the terms of treaty on that point were complied with.

On the 15th of January, the Union Church voted to meet for worship, as soon as the joint committee which had been appointed for that purpose should procure a person to preach to the united society, in the meeting-house of the First Parish; and that they would then consider Rev. Mr. Punderson released from his parochial duties.

The confessions of faith and covenants of the two churches were found to be substantially and verbally nearly the same; but being thought too long, they were condensed into what was considered a faithful summary.

The council for the dismissal of Rev. Mr. Allen met on the 5th of February; and, with the highest expressions of esteem and affection for the retiring pastor, and of deep sympathy in the regret of his people, consented to it solely as a measure indispensable to the proposed union, which they viewed with the warmest approbation and congratulation. The 25th of February was fixed for the termination of Mr. Allen's pastorate.

Among the papers of Dr. Timothy Childs, we find a letter which affords some hints as to Mr. Allen's feelings in this emergency; and from which we may fairly infer that the First Parish was less prosperous than the Union, financially. It is as follows:

HONORED SIR:—In answer to your favor, received this morning, I would observe, that in the short conversation I had with you some time ago, it was far from my intention to suggest anything that would impede the proposed union. The consideration of an incompetent support had, I believe, no more than its just weight in influencing me to pursue the course which I have taken. I was satisfied that I could not long remain in Pittsfield and endeavored to select such a time for the negotiation respecting union as would be most advantageous to my parish. I am highly gratified with the result. Believing that any obstructions to the union on the part of our parish would be very injurious to the interests of the parish, tending to divide and perhaps destroy it, I trust the agreement will be carried into effect. With respect to myself, it would not be honorable to my character to remain

after what has been done. Much has been said respecting the probability of my having a call to Hanover. Whatever may be the event, it can make no difference respecting my continuance in Pittsfield.

I propose, being previously dismissed, to remove my family to Hanover, the 17th or 18th of February, and should esteem it a kindness in my friends, if they will make some exertions to procure for me, a few days previous, a part of my salary, that I may make arrangements for removal. I am, with great respect, yours very sincerely,

WM. ALLEN.

PITTSFIELD, January 16, 1817.

It will be remembered that Mr. Allen had married a daughter of President Wheelock of Dartmouth college.

A council called by Union Church, met on the 5th of May, and with like terms of respect and affection, consented to the dismissal of Rev. Mr. Punderson, to take effect "whenever the General Court should incorporate the two Congregational societies into one." And, like the previous council, it expressed its approval of the union and its pleasure in the promised restoration of harmony to the Congregational fold in Pittsfield.

No legislative incorporation was had as contemplated by the council. But it was only necessary for the abnormal bodies which had held the field in Pittsfield, to terminate their corporate existence in some legal manner, when, by force of law, the old town-parish would revive, and all persons in its precinct not set off by certificate to a dissenting society, would instantly become members of it. By what formula this was accomplished is immaterial.

There is no record of any meeting of the Union Church, for business, after the council of May; but the First Church, on the 3d of July, passed the following resolution :

Whereas, the religious societies in this town *are now* united into one, and as it has long been wished that the two churches become united,
 • • • and as it is extremely desirable that this union be made complete without further delay: therefore voted, that Deacon Maynard and Vivus Osborne be a committee on the part of this church to unite with a committee of the church of Union Parish, to call a council consisting of three ministers with their delegates, viz.: the Rev. Messrs. Collins of Lanesborough, Shepard of Lenox, and Jennings of Dalton, to declare us one church by mutual agreement.

We do not know who were the committee on the part of the Union Church; but the council assembled on the morning of July

7th, at a private house; and after a session with the committees of the two churches, repaired to the First meeting-house which was filled with a great assembly. Here they made public their action by reading the following minutes:

At an ecclesiastical council, convened July 7, 1817, at the house of Josiah Bissell, Esq., in Pittsfield, by letters missive from a joint committee appointed by the two churches in Pittsfield, for the object of uniting the two churches into one, agreeably to ecclesiastical order, the following pastors and delegates were present:

From Lanesborough, Rev. Daniel Collins and Wolcott Hubbell, Esq.

From Lenox, Rev. Samuel Shepard and Deacon Stephen Wells.

From Dalton, Rev. Ebenezer Jennings and Deacon Ashley Williams.

Mr. Collins was chosen moderator, and Mr. Jennings scribe, and the council was opened by prayer.

The council had the records of the two churches so far as they related to the union contemplated, and discovering a pacific and uniting spirit in the several steps which were taken to promote a cordial union, they are satisfied of their sincere intention to unite together as brethren in the common faith of our Lord and to walk together in fellowship and to sit together at the same table.

These minutes having been read, the moderator proceeded: "The committee of the churches exhibited before us, the Articles of Faith and the Covenant which the two churches have proposed to make and which we cordially approve, and which, if now adopted by the church in our presence, we are prepared to declare."

At this point the Articles of Faith and Covenant were read and all the members of the united church gave their assent by rising. The council then proceeded as follows:

We are now ready to declare you a united church according to ecclesiastical order, and we acknowledge you as a church in regular standing, and will hold fellowship as with other Congregational churches in this Association of Ministers.

We congratulate you on your union and beseech the Great Head of the Church to cement it with that love which suffers long and is kind. Be forgiving toward one another, bear each other's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. We commend you to that Grace which is able to make you wise unto salvation, and you an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Amen.

And thus the two parishes between which the Congregationalists of Pittsfield had, for nearly seven years, been divided, ceased

to be; the ancient parochial organization revived, and one church held the field.

The event was accompanied by other appropriate religious services and thanksgiving, and appears to have created general joy in the town, to whose temporal as well as spiritual welfare it was—as Rev. Messrs. Allen and Punderson had discovered—essential. Much was yet to be done to cement the union, and to some it was doubtless distasteful, and by some distrusted;¹ but the fraternal prayer of the council was fully answered, and soon and permanently, the Congregational Church and Parish in Pittsfield, became as distinguished for peace and harmony, as it had long been for the reverse.

¹ It is singular that no mention can be found in the columns of the *Sun* of events so marked and important as the council of July, and the acts of the churches which led to it.

CHAPTER XIII.

PASTORATE OF REV. DR. HUMPHREY.

[1817-1823.]

Changes in the mode of transacting parish-business—Rev. Heman Humphrey chosen pastor—Sketch of Doctor Humphrey—His installation at Pittsfield—State of the Pittsfield parish—Doctor Humphrey's fitness to harmonize its conflicts—Pastoral work—Catalogue of Bible-class—Sunday-school—His release of dissenting-members of the parish from the payment of taxes—Condition of the dissenting parishes—A remarkable revival—Its effects on morals and feuds—Fourth of July, and St. John's day—Mr. Humphrey is invited to the presidency of Amherst collegiate institute—Opposition to his acceptance—His own doubts—Accepts under the advice of a council—Farewell to Pittsfield—His return—Residence and death there—Interesting incidents.

ALTHOUGH the town-parish system of supporting public worship was revived in 1817, the six years' experience of poll-parishes was not without its effect, which was manifested afterwards upon various occasions; and, first in a change of the manner in which parochial business was transacted by the town. It was resolved in 1796, that only Congregationalists should vote upon the disposition of taxes assessed exclusively upon members of that order; but previous to 1810, business concerning the support of public-worship was acted upon in ordinary town-meetings, to which all persons qualified to vote in town-affairs were "warned," and in which the ordinary secular municipal affairs were discussed and determined.

But in 1817—no parochial business having been transacted by the town for the preceding seven years—such business began to be confined exclusively to meetings warned for that special purpose; the warrant still being issued by the selectmen and directed to the constable, but requiring him to summon only those qualified to vote in the affairs of the "Congregational society" in said town.

This society having no officers, organization, or other means of independent action—being served by the selectmen, assessors, clerk, treasurer and constable elected by the town—a proposition to organize a parish by the choice of a special board, was, in November, 1818, referred to a committee consisting of John Chandler Williams, Josiah Bissell, and Joshua Danforth,—who on the 23d of that month submitted the following report:

Your committee, on enquiry, do not find that there is more than one town, situated as this town is, in the whole commonwealth, in which the parochial concerns for the support of public worship, are managed and conducted by officers chosen for parish-purposes exclusively. Your committee are satisfied, that hitherto the support of public worship by the Congregational society, has been so managed, and we believe always will be, as that no part of the expenses made for its support has been, or can be, paid out of any money except that which is voted and granted for that purpose solely; and assessed on, and paid by, the inhabitants of that society only. Your committee are of opinion that a majority of the parish would not be disposed to adopt any new arrangement, at present, for the purpose contemplated.—We therefore would add, that we do not deem it expedient at this time to elect parish-officers. We would, however, advise that the town-treasurer should annually exhibit to the selectmen, at or before the March meeting, an account current of the money raised for the support of public worship, and the manner in which it has been expended; in order that any person, belonging to this town, may, if he pleases, examine the same, and in that way insure those who do not belong to the Congregational society, that no part of their money is used for the parish's purposes.

The report was accepted, and the matter of further organization of the parish rested until 1834.

The united Congregational church of Pittsfield, now reassuming the name and rank of the First Church, voted September 1, 1817, to invite Rev. Heman Humphrey, of Fairfield, Connecticut, to settle with them in the gospel ministry. It is not stated that a separate vote of the First and Union churches was had, according to the terms of their agreement. Perhaps their harmony had already become so ripe, or the choice of Mr. Humphrey was so unanimous, that this ceremony was deemed superfluous.

The parish, on the 17th of September, concurred in the choice by a vote of sixty-eight to eleven, and tendered Mr. Humphrey a salary of nine hundred dollars per annum, on condition that he

should relinquish all claims to the ministry-land or other property of the town.

Heman Humphrey was born in West Simsbury, now Canton, Hartford county, Connecticut, March 26, 1779. His father, Solomon Humphrey, was a descendant of Michael Humphrey, who emigrated from England to Massachusetts before 1643. In the long line of ancestors between Michael and Heman, were many honorable and reverend men. Solomon, the father of the latter, was born in 1747, and married, a second wife, Hannah, daughter of Capt. John Brown, of West Simsbury, who died while an officer in the war of the revolution, at Harlem Heights; and from whom also descended that other Capt. John Brown, who died at Harper's Ferry. Heman, the oldest son of this marriage, was the pastor selected by the First Church and Parish of Pittsfield, in 1817. His father was a substantial farmer, and is described as "a man of good common-school education; of a more than ordinary taste for reading; of good sense and unblemished moral character, temperate, industrious, and frugal." The mother was a woman "of uncommon mental capacity, and an eager reader of such books as could be obtained; the number of which, however, was very small." Heman's early education was of the character usually bestowed upon children of such parents in Connecticut, at that time. He thus describes what it was when, at the age of seventeen, he supposed it finished: "I knew almost nothing of geography as taught by globe and maps, was but indifferently versed in the higher rules of arithmetic, and knew nothing of English grammar, except a little found in one of the earlier editions of Webster's spelling-book." He was fond of reading, but his course of study of that kind was confined to *The New England Primer*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, with an occasional stray number of the *Hartford Courant*. Shortly after he had graduated from this course of study, the village-pastor succeeded in having a small neighborhood library collected, of which Heman made excellent use, often, by the aid of pine-torches or of the kitchen-fire, extending his perusal of its contents far into the night. After his education, in this fashion, was "completed," he spent five summers, as "hired man" on farms in various towns, devoting winters to school-teaching. Fortunately, his fourth summer was spent with Governor Treadwell of Farmington, "a Christian and an exceed-

ingly able theologian, as well as an able judge and an incorruptible statesman;" whose library and conversation gave a new impulse to Heman's intellectual progress. Two years later, being left at leisure by an accidental failure to secure a re-engagement with Governor Treadwell, and being encouraged by his pastor, Rev. Jonathan Miller, with the suggestion that he might one day become a minister, he began, under his instruction, the study of the Latin language; and with an intermission of two months, spent in the harvest-field for the sake of health, devoted the season to study. With alternations of farm-labor, teaching and study, Mr. Humphrey went on until the spring of 1803. At that date, he was advised to make an effort to enter the junior class of Yale college the next autumn; and by the most assiduous devotion to study, he succeeded in doing so; in that time reading Horace, mastering algebra, learning the rudiments of the Greek language—even from the alphabet—and enabling himself to pass an examination in two books of the Iliad and the whole of the Greek testament. He passed a creditable college course, and by dint of school-master's work, and that of the librarian of the Linonian Society, graduated without debt; and possessed of a small sum with which to enter upon his professional studies.

Mr. Humphrey's earliest life may be well said to have been of a religious character. So strict, indeed, was his regard for religious duty, that once, having wandered during the forenoon of a Fast-day, with a companion, over the fields and woods, instead of going to meeting, his conscience so smote him that he never tried it again. His biographer, however, considers that it was not until the winter of 1798-9, that he had any marked religious experience. The record of that experience shows it to have been such as that to which the Calvinistic Faith, especially in that earnest time, subjected the strongest natures. "If I was then born again," he writes, "I was born a Calvinist, 'not of flesh nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God, who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.' I then fully embraced the doctrines of the shorter Catechism, and from this platform I have never swerved."

When he entered upon his classical studies, it was with the view to prepare himself to preach the doctrines so emphatically declared, and at the close of those studies, others of a purely theological character naturally followed. There being then no

theological seminary in the country, Mr. Humphrey, after remaining a few months in New Haven, in charge of a school and at the same time commencing his theological studies under the direction of President Dwight, entered a theological class conducted by Rev. Asahel Hooker in Goshen, Connecticut, in the spring of 1806. In October following, he was licensed to preach by the Litchfield North Association. His first permanent settlement was at Fairfield, Connecticut, where he was ordained March 16, 1807, and remained until May, 1817.

On the 20th of April, 1808, one year after his settlement in Fairfield, Mr. Humphrey was married to Sophia, only daughter of Deacon Noah Porter, of Farmington. His ten years of labor in that town were pleasant but full of effort. Among his successes there, were the doing away with the half-way covenant in the church, and a temperance reform effected by very bold and novel utterances in which he took what was then the unheard of position of total abstinence.

After leaving Fairfield, and preaching a few Sundays in Hartford, he accepted an urgent invitation to visit Pittsfield; the result being the call to settle over the united churches, which we have recorded.¹

This call, Mr. Humphrey hesitated to accept. We quote again from his memoirs, which after recording the coming together of the two congregations under the old roof, proceed thus:

The difficult process of organic reunion was now to be promoted. Mr. Humphrey was invited to undertake the task. He shrank from it. He feared the effect of the severe climate of the Berkshire hills upon his family. His "politics" might be regarded with suspicion. But some one must become their pastor. "I did not wish to go to Pittsfield. Not that I had any objection to the people. They were an intelligent congregation. There was a good degree of active piety in the church, and they had treated me kindly. But the congregation was spread over the whole town—six miles square. They were united but not amalgamated. A good deal of the old leaven remained. Some of the prominent families stood aloof. And, to increase my perplexity, I was strongly solicited to return and to be resettled over the church and

¹The foregoing sketch of the life of Dr. Humphrey, before his settlement in Pittsfield, is condensed from an eloquently written volume published by J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia, in 1869, and entitled *Memorial Sketches of Heman Humphrey and Sophia Porter Humphrey*, by Rev. Drs. Z. M. Humphrey and Henry Neill, their son and son-in-law.

congregation in Fairfield. I was assured of a competent support. But my convictions of duty at length overcame my objections. I became convinced that the call was from a higher source than the voice of the people, and it was not for me to *choose*, but to *obey*."

Such was the man who was invited to become the first pastor of the Congregational church in Pittsfield, after its reunion; and such were the circumstances, and his own personal feelings, under which he accepted the invitation. And with this thorough comprehension of the situation, he was installed on the 26th of October, "in the presence of a numerous and solemn concourse;" Rev. Dr. Shepard of Lenox, delivering the sermon, Rev. Dr. Hyde of Lee, delivering the charge, and Rev. Mr. Jennings of Dalton, giving the right-hand of fellowship.

By what special human agency, the church and parish were led to so happy a choice of pastor, we are not told; but probably the whole range of the New England clergy did not afford another minister so peculiarly fitted to do the work which lay before him. A thorough scholar, a forcible and correct writer, and a speaker of more than common eloquence, he commanded admiration, as well as respect, by his talents. His earlier associations had rendered him familiar with the modes of thought, the humors, the prejudices, and the mental capacity—natural and acquired—of rural populations, such as that of Pittsfield then was. He was also practically acquainted with all that pertained to agricultural pursuits, and ready at need to skillfully perform any of the labors of the farmer. This, to be sure, was not unusual with the clergy of that day. Most of his clerical brethren could do the same; but few of them had the tact to avail themselves of it in ingratiating themselves with their parishioners, not only without derogating from the dignity of their profession, but, as he did, adding to the respect inspired by it.¹

He had, moreover, the advantage of a most instructive pastoral

¹ Many anecdotes of Mr. Humphrey's skill and prudence in winning the disaffected or the indifferent are still related by his parishioners. One of those oftenest repeated is that of his conquering the heart of a farmer who had steadily refused to attend the Sabbath services, by visiting him in his harvest-field, and, without a word of professional exhortation, engaging him in conversation upon farming, and then taking his "cradle," cutting a swath of grain, as if he had been used only to a farmer's life all his days. *Memorial Sketches*, p. 72.

experience in Fairfield, where he succeeded in moulding a parish very much to his own ideal from very crude materials; doing away with much erroneous practice to which his people had been wedded, and introducing, by degrees more or less insensible, means of good to which they had been strangers.

With all these advantages of education and experience, Mr. Humphrey had also the quickest appreciation of character, a keen insight into the springs of human action, a calmness and equanimity which left all his faculties habitually at command, and a shrewdness which applied them with rare adroitness to the management of affairs.

All these high qualities of a governing and organizing mind were in him imperatively ruled by a sense of duty which admitted no stint of his labor, and forbade him—for the attainment of any end, however plausible—to swerve one iota in his interpretation of the doctrines which he believed embodied in “the faith once delivered to the saints,” or to falter in his administration of the discipline established by the Head of the Church.

All these qualifications were called for in full by the task which awaited Mr. Humphrey in Pittsfield; and, with them all, it was one from which he might well shrink, as he did. But, having once accepted it, he was a man to put all doubts and fears and shrinkings behind him, and to press forward with all his powers to its accomplishment. His method in this is thus partially detailed in the “Memorial Sketches:”

When he assumed the charge of the congregation, “very few of its leading men, such as lawyers, physicians and merchants, were professors of religion.” They were, however, regular attendants of public worship. The first object of the new pastor was to win the respect of all for the pulpit. But little pastoral visiting was, therefore, attempted during the first winter. The effects of careful study being realized, systematic visitation began in the opening spring, and was vigorously conducted through the succeeding months. The old methods, so successful in Fairfield, were adopted. A weekly lecture was established in the out-districts. The Sunday-school, which then began to take a recognized place among the institutions of the church, received much attention. The baptized children of the church were collected, once in three months, for public catechetical instruction. A Bible-class of young women was also established.¹

¹ The agreement for the formation of this Bible-class is preserved, and shows that it was not exclusively for young women. It is as follows:

In 1821, Dr. Humphrey addressed the annual meeting of two female charitable societies of the village. Our information regarding these organizations is meager, but their charity appears, by the address, to have been chiefly applied to religious purposes. Dr. Humphrey

BIBLE-CLASS—We, whose names are annexed to this paper, feeling it to be a duty, as well as a privilege, to gain a more intimate knowledge of the Bible, hereby agree to associate for the purpose of attending such recitations, once in a fortnight, as our pastor may assign us, and also to hear such explanations and instructions as he may give. * * * * *

PITTSFIELD, May, 1823.

Henry Strong, Dr. H. H. Childs, James McKnight, James H. Kellogg, Samuel Colt, Uriah Lathrop, John Mason, Edward P. Humphrey, David White, Robert Colt, George A. Peck, Samuel Crocker, Elbridge G. Frisby, Nelson K. Strong, George R. Whitney, Eliza Lathrop, Ann Childs, Julia Porter, Frances Danforth, Maria Allen, Amelia Simpson, Mary Ann Porter, Martha Gold, Eliza Luce, Sarah Ann Weller, M. Clark, Fidelia Clark, Aurelia Johnson, Ann Burge, Martha Root, Sarah Ann Colt, Mary Ann Brown, Julia Colt, Elizabeth Campbell, Clarissa Colt, Loisa Adams, Louisa Merriam, Aurora Eells, Amelia Danforth, Caroline Allen, Salome Danforth, Mary Bissell, Eliza Brown, Harriet Allen, Caroline Colt, Minerva Kittridge, E. M. Seeley, Olivia Porter, Martha D. Bramin, Catherine Smith, Sarah Moore, M. Castle, Charlotte Cady, Abby Warner, Mary Ann Kellogg, Climene Woodworth, Eunice Pomeroy, Parthenia L. Pomeroy, Mary Ann Dickinson, Mary Brown, Mary Dorrance, Elizabeth Jackson, Adelia Merrick, Sarah Chapin, Eunice Rossiter, Nancy Ingersoll, William Goodrich, Christiana Van Valkenburg, Cornelia Dubois, Hannah M. Tyler, Maria Clapp, John Day, James Warri-ner, Amelia Goodrich, John Ayres, Horace Bissell, John B. Eldridge, Wil- liam A. Kittredge, Lemuel Pomeroy, Jr., George McKnight, Justin Chapman, William W. Ward, Edward Goodrich, Daniel Goodrich, George Colt, Thad- deus Clapp, Peleg Blankinship, Mary Colt, Sophia Warner, Ann D. Childs, Mary W. Childs, Clarissa Lathrop, Cordelia Johnson, C. Colt, Elizabeth Goodrich, Huldah Goodrich, Edith Powell, Chester Woodworth, Levi Thomas, Charles J. Fox Allen, Aurelia Hollister, Newell, Clarissa Strong, Sophronia Kitteridge, — Beebe, Maria Center, Abigail Ayres, Cordelia Blankinship.

There is no mention of the establishment of a Sunday-school in the church-records, but the following paragraph occurs in an article upon "The Sabbath-school in Pittsfield," published in the *Sun*, of November 15, 1820: "This is the fourth season of the Sunday-school in this town, and in view of the exertions which have been made, and the good success which has attended them, all who wish well to the rising generation, who seek the well fare of society, or who pray for the prosperity of Zion, have abundant cause to thank God and take courage. It is a pleasant part of our duty to give a short abstract of the doings of the school. The whole number of verses, from the Bible, committed to memory, is thirty-three thousand three hundred and fifty-nine; verses of hymns, eight thousand six hundred and twenty-eight; and of answers in catechisms, twelve thousand seven hundred and twenty;

expressed peculiar satisfaction with the Young Ladies' Benevolent Society, which consisted of eighteen or twenty members, who had for more than two years devoted one afternoon or evening in each week to labor, principally with the needle, for charitable purposes; the product of the year 1820 being more than one hundred dollars. The treasurers' reports of both societies were such as to call for the speaker's congratulations.

Soon all was working smoothly, and success crowned every form of pastoral labor. Old wounds began to heal, and the congregation became organically one.

Among the measures adopted by Mr. Humphrey in doing away with prejudice against the church and parish of which he was the pastor, two are especially noteworthy, as illustrative of Mr. Humphrey's knowledge of men, and as showing how little his sense of right and expediency was obscured by the prestige of law or custom.

Shortly after his installation, discovering that several persons who did not attend upon his ministry—members of his parish by the law, but not by their own will—were assessed for his support; he directed the treasurer to remit their taxes, and charge the deficiency which would arise to his own account. He thus relates the incident in a discourse preached in 1855, and entitled "Pittsfield forty years ago:"

Not only were they taxable, but they were actually taxed, whether they ever attended worship with us or not. Some of their taxes may have been abated by the society's committee; although, if they were, I believe it was not till after I had called on the treasurer, Mr. Dickinson, when my salary became due at the end of the year, and requested him to strike off some twenty or thirty names from his tax-book, and charge me with the amount of their parish-taxes. I did this by no man's request, or suggestion; but because I thought it unwise, to say

making together fifty-six thousand seven hundred; which, supposing the number of scholars to be one hundred and seventy, gives an average to each of three hundred and twenty-nine. The greatest number committed by any one of the pupils is six thousand two hundred and seventeen; the next greatest is two thousand six hundred and eighty-three.

During Dr. Humphrey's pastorate there was also established the New Year's morning prayer-meeting, in which, to this day, the people of all the Protestant denominations in Pittsfield, unite at sunrise on the first day of every year, in the First Congregational Church, and which is always an occasion of the deepest interest.

the least, for the parish to press the collection. The sums were generally small, to be sure, but large enough to give plausibility to the complaints which some, who did not attend our meeting were sure to make. In this way, I believe, everything on that score was kept quiet throughout the town.

A similar disposition is shown in the following letter, which we copy from the town-records:

To the Congregational Parish in Pittsfield—Gentlemen:

In consideration of the scarcity of money, together with the contemplated extra expenses of the society this season—and to give you a new proof that I “seek not yours, but you,”—I hereby tender you the relinquishment, for the current year, of *seventy-five* dollars of my stipulated salary. I should have said *one hundred*; but I thought it would be doing more good with a little, to reserve *twenty-five* dollars, for the benefit of such as may be unable to pay their parish-tax; and for this last sum I shall hold myself accountable in my annual settlement with your treasurer.

Wishing you every temporal and spiritual blessing, I am, gentlemen, with great respect, your servant in the gospel of Christ.

HEMAN HUMPHREY.

PITTSFIELD, April 16, 1821.

By acts like these, Mr. Humphrey secured among the people a large measure of added respect both for himself and his office. The assessment of taxes for the support of public worship upon non-attendants, had long been a source of complaint and vexation; and their relinquishment, in 1818, by the new minister, must have contributed not a little to the harmony of the town, while, by removing the odium which attached to their collection, he broke down a barrier which would have obstructed the approaches by which he hoped to bring back some to the fold from which they had strayed.

The other religious parishes in Pittsfield had not profited, as might have been expected, from the troubles of the Congregationalists. They were indeed proportionately more feeble than they were at the opening of the century. At one time, indeed, in the course of the controversy, it seemed likely to result in the establishment of an Episcopalian parish, but the opportunity passed; the return of Mr. Van Schaack to New York, left that denomination without a local leader, and some who had been prominently associated with him became members of Union Parish, and through

that door, finally entered the First Congregational Church. The Methodists, who had flourished for a time, had been weakened by dissensions among themselves; and, although they had begun, under the pastorate of Mr. Hibbard and others, to recover their prosperity, had not fully regained their strength. The Shakers do not seem to have obtained any considerable number of proselytes since 1796, to compensate for their natural decrease.

Doctor Humphrey, in the address before mentioned, describes the condition of the several religious denominations of the town, as follows:

Of the Baptists there was a respectable society in the west part of the town; but Elder John Francis had been dead four years, and they remained vacant about nine. Having no meeting-house as yet, of their own, they commonly worshipped in the school-house, and sometimes in the Methodist meeting-house, which stood not far from where Mr. Josiah Francis then lived.

There was a considerable number of Methodist farmers, residing chiefly in the West Part. Then, or soon after, there were two branches of that church: the Primitive Wesleyans and the Independents.¹

The former worshipped in the meeting-house I have just mentioned, and the seceders in another place farther on towards the mountains. Methodist meetings were also held from time to time, by appointment, in the old school-house, at the east end of the village.

The great body of the people were Congregationalists. In the *village*, there was not, so far as I could find, a single Episcopalian, or Baptist. As well as I can now remember, Elder Green (who lived near the corner of Newell and Elm streets) was the only Methodist; and he could hardly be said to live in the village.

Such were the little parishes to which Mr. Humphrey was neighbor, in his ministry of six years with the Congregationalists of Pittsfield.

In that period, some material changes were made in the condition of those parishes, and events of surpassing interest occurred in the history of his own church. The chief among the latter was the first and most remarkable general revival which was ever known in the town. We condense an account from the "Memorial Sketches."

¹Rev. Mr. Hibbard, who must have been well informed, states that the division of the Methodists took place prior to 1812, and began to be healed as early as 1814, at least.

In the spring of 1820, revivals occurred in neighboring villages, and the church in Pittsfield was roused to special prayer. The sacrament of the Lord's supper, in May, was celebrated with unusual solemnity. A deep religious interest prevailed during the summer, and resulted in the addition of forty members to the church, in autumn.

The next May, Rev. Asahel Nettleton, the celebrated evangelist, worn down by his exhausting labors, sought rest in a visit to Mr. Humphrey. A general desire to hear him, arose, of course; and, finally yielding to it, he saw such signs of encouragement as brought his rest to a speedy end. Says Dr. Humphrey:

In two or three weeks we had unmistakable evidence that God had begun to revive His work. Our lecture-room was crowded; men were there who had not been wont to attend our evening meetings, and there was a very marked solemnity in the congregation on the Sabbath. Through the whole month of June, the interest increased among all classes; toward the close, very rapidly. By the middle of July, the work was at its height. It pervaded all classes, and extended to all parts of the town; but principally affected heads of families, and particularly the prominent men of the village. The whole face of the community was changed. Religion was the all-absorbing topic of conversation. The revival continued all summer. On the first Sabbath of November, the harvest was gathered in; and a glorious harvest it was. Between eighty and ninety, the rich and the poor, the high and the low, stood up together in the long, broad aisle, and before angels and men, avouched the Lord to be their God, and were received into the Church. Never had such a scene been witnessed in Pittsfield. The joy of the Church overflowed in tears and thanksgiving. I am sure there must have been great joy in Heaven.

"Great care," say the authors of the sketches, "was taken in the instruction of the converts of this revival; and they, with their children have been among the most honored members of the church, to the present day."

Among the results of the deep religious feeling at this time, and of the teachings which it inclined the people to receive favorably, was a very marked change in the tone of society, producing a great restriction of the latitude previously allowed in manners and customs, especially those relating to social life and amusements. In the excitements and new emotions arising from the intensity of this revival, there was also lost the last traces of those

feuds which had agitated the church in Pittsfield for half a century, and which otherwise might have lingered for years.

One incident occurred in connection with this revival, which is curiously illustrative of prevailing modes of thought, and of a peculiar antagonism of opinion, which was also developed in another form in the constitutional convention which had just closed its session.

Dr. Humphrey believed that it was essential in order to continue and deepen the religious interest which prevailed, that all secular excitements should be suspended, and that so far as possible, the town should maintain the solemnity and quiet of the Sabbath. He was indignant that this favorable condition was, against his remonstrance, interrupted by a spirited celebration of the Masonic Festival of St. John the Baptist, by Mystic Lodge, on the 26th of June, when an eloquent address was delivered by Rev. Hooper Cumming, D. D., of Albany, after which the Lodge marched in procession to Center's coffee-house, where they dined with the usual festal accompaniments. He determined, however, to substitute for the ordinary celebration of the Fourth of July, solemn religious services. Among the subjects of the revival were most of the elder citizens, whose influence had hitherto been preponderating; and through them, and by his own efforts, Dr. Humphrey was able to induce the committee of arrangements to assent to his proposition. In the *Sun* of June 27th, therefore, the following announcement appeared :

Information having been communicated by the committee of arrangements for the celebration of the NATIONAL JUBILEE, that the celebration will this year be dispensed with, the public are informed that the day will be devoted to the worship of ALMIGHTY GOD. The ringing of the bell at sunrise will be the signal for a prayer-meeting at the lecture-room. At two o'clock in the afternoon, public worship will be attended at the meeting-house, where a sermon will be delivered. Our fellow-citizens of the adjacent towns are affectionately invited to Pittsfield, to join in the exercises. As this joyous anniversary has never returned to the free inhabitants of our beloved country under more auspicious circumstances, whether we regard the civil or religious aspect of things, and, as the lapse of another year has been replete with the manifestations of Divine favor to our own town, it is confidently believed that every grateful heart will be disposed to pay its thanksgiving to God for past mercies, and to pray for the continuance of them.

This announcement was not at all agreeable to a considerable number of the citizens of the town. The celebration of Independence Day, was at that era invariably observed in all towns of the size and character of Pittsfield; and the programme of exercises was almost as well fixed by custom as those of the Sabbath. The ringing of the bells, and the salutes of artillery at sunrise and sunset, the procession, the reading of the Declaration of Independence, the oration, with the accompanying prayer and singing, never failed. The orations were frequently published, and the toasts always. In fact, selections from the most brilliant of these intellectual scintillations at the celebrations in different towns and cities sparkled in the columns of the newspapers for weeks after the great day. To the younger portion of the community, the Fourth of July afforded the happiest hours of the year; and by many of the older generation, with whom the traditions of the revolution were yet fresh, it was observed as their political Sabbath. In June, 1821, the press throughout the country expressed a pleasing expectation of unusual spirit in the approaching celebration of Independence Day; and it held up as a good example, the city of Washington where John Quincy Adams was to read the declaration, and William Wirt was to pronounce the oration. A large number of the citizens of Pittsfield were unwilling to forego the realization of these pleasant anticipations, and notwithstanding the assent of the regular committee to the request of Dr. Humphrey, they resolved to celebrate the anniversary, as the *Sun* put it, "with those demonstrations of joy which become a truly free, patriotic and grateful community."

There were the usual salutes and bell-ringing at sunrise; and at 12 o'clock, a procession with martial music and a military escort. The exercises were at the meeting-house, but Mr. Humphrey declined to act as chaplain, and Rev. Robert Green "made an appropriate and patriotic address to the Throne of Grace," Major S. M. McKay read the Declaration of Independence, and Henry K. Strong, principal of the academy, pronounced an oration, after which the procession returned to the hotel.

"As the hour for the celebration of a solemn and religious character was to commence," said the *Sun* in its report, "had arrived, the committee of arrangements gave notice to their elder fellow-citizens, many of whom had joined in the procession, that the dinner would not be served up until after the religious exer-

cises were closed; so that all who might wish should have an opportunity to attend without interruption." The exercises in the church were attended by a solemn and reverent congregation. Mr. Humphrey made an impressive introductory prayer and delivered a sermon of remarkable power from the text, "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John viii: 36.

Unfortunately the meeting-house was situated upon the little public square in whose circumscribed space it was the custom for the people of all classes to assemble on all anniversaries and other exciting occasions, and around which were located the three principal hotels of the town—the largest within a few feet of the meeting-house. It was especially the place of assemblage on the Fourth of July, and at cattle-shows. And on this occasion the usual Fourth of July crowd was gathered upon it, making the usual noises with Chinese crackers, drums, and all the instruments which make that day hideous to sensitive ears. Besides this, the Flood-wood company of militia, which had begun to celebrate the anniversary in the manner inevitable before the temperance reform, and not altogether disused since, paraded, and after marching as well as they were able around the square, proceeded, with the insolence of intoxication, to pass with drums beating and fifes screaming through the tower under the belfry of the meeting-house.

The character of the gentlemen engaged in the secular celebration forbids the belief that they gave countenance to these acts; and we have the word of those whose word was never impeached, that they did not. Mr. Humphrey, however, believed that the disturbance was incited by them, and in his indignation prolonged the services to an unusual length; upon which the committee of arrangements, in their turn provoked, ordered the dinner to proceed with the ordinary salutes by cannon, at the close of each regular toast. The cannon were of necessity placed within less than a hundred feet of the meeting-house, and the result was a complication which produced a remarkable and memorable scene within. Doctor Humphrey, fifty years afterwards, gave the following account of it:

The first discharge shook the house. My text was, "*If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*" It was one of the most appropriate I could think of for the occasion. In two or three minutes, there was

another discharge. The shock of the first being over, the second produced a solemnity more profound than the sermon would have occasioned, and gave me opportunity for enlargement which I had not anticipated. I had reached the application of my sermon. By the time of the third discharge, the whole congregation seemed perfectly composed. As the cannonading went on, I took occasion to hold up the contrast of Christ's freemen and the servants of Satan, as strikingly illustrated both without and within the house. By this train of extempore remark I added something like a quarter of an hour to the length of the sermon. Each discharge of the cannon overpowered my voice for a moment, but I went on. When I had finished, I called upon Rev. Dr. Shepard, of Lenox, who was present to lead in prayer. His remarkably heavy voice sounded triumphantly over the disturbance. When we came out, some of the more prominent men, among whom was the sheriff of the county, were very much excited, and proposed to have the leading rioters arrested and punished. I said, "By no means. In attacking us they have shot themselves through and through. They have so outraged the feelings of the whole community that we have only to leave them to themselves, and go on with our Master's work, praying God to give them repentance."

I have never witnessed a more striking example of the moral sublime than on that day and evening. Those who had been foremost in the disturbance hastened away as soon as they could. By eight o'clock there was scarcely a soul left upon the green; whereas, on all former like occasions, a large number lingered there and kept up their "celebration" until late at night. The evening lecture, which had been appointed from the desk under the cannon's roar, was unusually full and solemn. The work went on for some days with more power than ever. We had but to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord."

A writer in the Charleston (S. C.) *Intelligencer* thus closes a description of the scene :

I sat near the Rev. Mr. Nettleton ; and so delighted was he with the discourse and so accurately prescient, too, was he of the result, that whenever an apt allusion dropped from the lips of the preacher, he would turn round with a holy smile ; and whenever a shot from the canon pierced our ears he would say—it would involuntarily escape from him—"that is good—that is good." Speaking afterwards of the events of this day he observed to me: "Did you not feel calm? I thought there was a deep majestic calm overspreading the minds of Christians."

But whatever may have been Doctor Humphrey's views of the importance of preserving this day sacred to religious impressions,

and whatever may be now thought upon that point, it must be conceded that the gentlemen who then differed with him, and persisted in celebrating the day as they and their fathers had done, year after year, for nearly half a century, could not justly be classed with the riotous militia which with drum and fife wantonly disturbed the exercises in the meeting-house. They, voluntarily, it will be observed, intermitted their celebration while those exercises were in progress, postponing their dinner until an unusually late hour in order that they might not be interrupted; for the firing of cannon occurred only after the sermon had been protracted to an extreme length which exhausted their patience. The term young men, applied to them, is liable to mislead. The president at the dinner was Timothy Childs, Esq., who shortly after was elected to congress from the Rochester, New York, district. The reader of the declaration, Major S. M. McKay, had represented the town in the legislature, and among those associated with them were Jonathan Yale Clark and Dr. H. H. Childs, two of the three gentlemen whom the town had the year before chosen as its delegates to the convention for the revision of the state constitution, and the latter of whom the next year founded the Berkshire Medical College; William C. Jarvis, who represented the town that year and the three succeeding years in the legislature, who had just won a high reputation as an author by the publication of an excellent treatise upon political economy, and who in 1822, was a leading candidate for congress; Henry Hubbard, who seven years before had represented Lanesboro, Dr. A. P. Merrill of the United States army, and others of like character were also of the party.

It was, they averred, no hostility to religion which impelled them to the course they pursued; but that they regarded such patriotic demonstrations as entirely consistent with it, and unprejudicial to healthy religious feeling. From circumstances not peculiar to Pittsfield, but which pervaded all Massachusetts, many of them were at the time in a mood to vigorously resist what they considered clerical dictation, especially when it called upon them to give up observances which they so warmly cherished. The Free Masons had manifested the same spirit, the previous week, when the orator previously engaged for St. John's day having been persuaded to break his appointment—members of that body went to Albany, and engaging Dr. Cumming, an

orator whose eloquence is compared favorably with that of Edward Everett, brought him by fresh relays of horses to Pittsfield, just in season for the hour announced.

The celebrators of the Fourth put their views of it upon record in the toasts which were published in the *Sun's* report of the occasion, which was headed: "*The Day of Jubilee has Come and Flown.*"

Among the regular toasts the sixth reads:

Religion and Patriotism—They are not incompatible, and may the political Sabbath of our country be celebrated, solemnized, as the dictates of good and honest men may incline them: The seventh was: *Religious Liberty*—without which freedom is but a name. Among the volunteer sentiments were these:

By Levi Goodrich—The Rev. Mr. Green, chaplain of the day: may his "last days be his best days."

By Jonathan Yale Clark—Our national birthday: When the sons of America shall neglect to commemorate it, or to celebrate the memory of those who achieved it, then let nettles grow instead of wheat and cockles instead of barley.

By Spencer Clark—Due respect to our brethren not in unison with us this day; may they never cherish a hope to deprive us of a celebration sealed with the blood of our ancestors.

By Henry Hubbard, Esq.—Religion: While it nerved the arm of our fathers to fight for freedom, it cannot silence the voice of praise in their sons.

By Nelson Strong—The celebration of this anniversary: It teaches those tyrants who would clip the wings of our American eagle, we prize our privileges, we love our country.

By Arnold Bentley—Liberty, which was bequeathed to us, sealed by the blood of the fallen heroes of the revolution: may it not be abridged by priest-craft, nor trampled upon by a foreign despot.

By Major S. M. McKay—The fundamental principle of civil and religious liberty: The undisturbed enjoyment of civil and religious opinions.

These opinions are more definitely expressed in a card published in the *Sun*, of July 11th, which reads as follows:

OUR NATIONAL BIRTHDAY.

As our independence was achieved at the risk of everything dear to the American people; and as it has been the advice of our political patriarchs, as well as the undeviating practice of the friends of the American republic, to celebrate the return of its anniversary with

decent and suitable demonstrations of rejoicing; it was resolved, at a meeting of citizens of Pittsfield, and the neighboring towns, assembled at the hotel on the afternoon of the 4th current, not to abandon, on any future anniversary, the wise precepts and practice of the best men who ever adorned this, or any other, country.

Influenced by these views, it was resolved by the meeting, that the earliest moment should be embraced to give publicity to its determination to celebrate the next anniversary of our national independence with the suitable and customary demonstrations of joy and national festivity.

To carry this laudable design into full effect, a committee was chosen, of which the following were the Pittsfield members: Henry H. Childs, Joshua Danforth, Samuel M. McKay, Jonathan Yale Clark, John Churchill, Robert Stanton, Jonathan Allen, Jonathan Allen, 2d, Phinehas Allen, Oren Goodrich, William C. Jarvis and John Dickinson. George N. Briggs was the member from Adams.

It will be perceived that a very respectable minority of Mr. Humphrey's parish differed with him in regard to the propriety of omitting the celebration of the Fourth, even in the peculiar season during which that of 1821 occurred. Few of them, however, relaxed their friendship for him on that account, and some of them became members of the church during the revival then in progress.

In addition to his strictly pastoral duties, Mr. Humphrey took a sincere and active interest in the secular well-being of the town and parish. Many of the alterations and repairs of the meeting-house were due to his influence; and so, to some extent, was the improvement in church-music, and the gift by Joseph Shearer of a town-clock. He was active in the management of the common schools, the academies and the library. He was one of the original trustees of the medical college, and gave it his aid in its most trying days. He was also among the foremost in giving to the village those avenues of elms and maples which are now the pride of its finest streets; some of which he planted with his own hand.

In the midst of a life and labors like these, Mr. Humphrey was, in July, 1823, elected president of the Collegiate Institution, which afterwards became Amherst College. This institution was at that time held in the deepest disfavor by the people of Pittsfield and Berkshire county, who had for years been desperately

resisting the attempts of its friends to build it up by taking away Williams College from the spot where its founder had fixed it, and joining it with their own school at some point in the valley of the Connecticut; Northampton and Amherst being most prominently suggested. These attempts were denounced by the press of Berkshire as neither honest or generous, and the strongest resentment against their authors prevailed throughout the county. This feeling was intensified when, in 1821, Rev. Dr. Moore, the second president of Williams, and some of its professors were induced to resign their positions to accept similar ones at Amherst.

Dr. Moore died in June, 1823, and the proposition to fill his place by the removal of the able and beloved Pittsfield pastor, from the field in which he was so eminently useful, and in which it would be so difficult to provide a competent successor, roused all the old feeling into full life. Nor even if the call had been to a field upon which they looked with more favor, would the people of Pittsfield have considered the removal of Mr. Humphrey as justifiable. It did not seem that any other could present claims like those of the parish in which he had accomplished, and was accomplishing, so much good. Men of all denominations, who had the interests of the church and the town at heart, learned with unbounded regret that he was considering the question of accepting the call to Amherst. They feared that some of the moral evils which had been checked, but not destroyed, would revive if the champion, who held them in control, left his guard. The Congregationalists, whose union under his ministrations, had imperceptibly become amalgamation, did not feel themselves as yet in a condition to part with the physician who had healed them more perfectly than they knew. An extraordinary number of new converts seemed to have an especial need of, and claim upon, his fostering care, and certainly regarded him with the greatest affection. In the year 1821, fifty members had been added to the church; in 1822, there had been a hundred and twenty, and a few others had been received in 1823. More than a hundred and fifty neophytes in religion demanded his training and guidance. If he should remain, how many more might there be; if he left, how many of these might backslide. "I felt," said he, fifty years afterwards, "that this large increase of new members brought upon me a heavy weight of pastoral responsibility; and I tried,

in my poor imperfect way, to meet it as well as I could. After that, no people, perhaps, ever enjoyed a greater quietness than we did. And I said: 'I shall die in my nest.' How could I be lured from it? Least of all, when there was no storm, how could I shake myself out of it? But it is not in man to mark out his own destiny; and when he thinks himself most securely anchored, he may be nearest being drawn out to sea."

The position at Amherst, to which Mr. Humphrey was invited, was not more alluring to him, upon a superficial view, than it was agreeable to his parish for him to accept it.

The Collegiate Institution was, with many enemies and few friends, struggling to raise itself to the rank of a college. Its application to the legislature for permission to assume that character had just been refused. It was barely living on under an old charter as an academy: doing the work of a college, and giving to its students, so far as its scanty means enabled it, a collegiate education; but with no authority to confer degrees. To become its official head, was to challenge even more arduous labors, and more discouraging difficulties, than the president-elect had encountered either at Fairfield or Pittsfield, and that with far less assurance of success, and far less of the sympathy of his brethren in the ministry. But Mr. Humphrey seems to have found a potent fascination in such encounters; and, moreover, dreaded that, in declining them, he might be opposing the Divine will. He was, at all events, not the man to shun, through cowardice, the place to which he believed himself divinely appointed.

The question of duty was nevertheless far from clear, and the arguments for going to Amherst were very nearly balanced in his mind by those for remaining in Pittsfield. He thus states his position in his Half-Century discourse:

I must either say yes or no, which I did not dare to do on my own unsupported responsibility. It might be my duty to go and it might be my duty to stay: which, I could not decide, though my friends here thought the case perfectly plain. I was greatly perplexed; and more and more so, as I tried to weigh the reasons for and against. At length, after much and prayerful consideration, I came to the conclusion that I ought, in a regular way, to submit the question to an ecclesiastical council for advice. This, my friends strenuously opposed. They still insisted: It can't be your duty to do any such thing. We can't consent to help you off in any way. If you go the burden will be greater than

you can bear, and you will sink into the grave under it. Why should you run such a risk? Why give up a certainty for an uncertainty; or rather for a certain failure?

But neither these nor other reasons urged by his reluctant parishioners seemed to Mr. Humphrey conclusive against his asking the church to unite with him in calling a council. "I did so ask," his account continues, "proposing to submit the whole matter to them and abide their decision. They utterly declined: saying, they saw no reason for it, and I must take the entire responsibility of calling it, if I insisted upon such a reference. This increased my perplexity, but did not satisfy me that I ought to let the matter drop there. I wanted the advice of my brethren in the neighborhood. I called a council, laid the matter before them as well as I could, and was dismissed."

The records of the church do not perfectly accord with this account, and we give an abstract of the story as there given, partly to show what liability to error there is in the memory of the most clear-headed men, earnestly desiring to relate correctly matters likely to impress themselves most deeply and permanently on their minds. Mr. Humphrey's request for the church and society to unite with him in the call for a council was laid before the church on the 27th of August; and action upon it postponed to September 3d, in order to enable the society to take precedence in it. At the adjourned meeting, the parish having declined to join in the call, the church concurred. On the 18th of September, however, Mr. Humphrey renewed the subject by the following communication:

To the Congregational Church and Society in Pittsfield:

GENTLEMEN:—Since my last communication on the subject of my removal nothing has occurred to alter the result of my enquiries and reflections, in regard to the path of duty. I still think that the call from the Institution in Amherst is one which I ought to comply with, provided I can obtain your consent for a dismissal from my present ministerial charge. This, therefore, is to request that you will, through your respective committees, unite with me in calling a council of pastors and delegates to dissolve the connection now subsisting between us, according to the usages of our churches in similar cases.

Wishing you the Divine guidance and blessing, I am, gentlemen,

Your Affectionate Pastor,

H. HUMPHREY.

Upon the receipt of this communication both the church and the parish voted to unite in calling the council and appointed a joint committee for that purpose, consisting of Deacon Josiah Bissell, and Capt. Joseph Merrick, on the part of the church, and of Samuel M. McKay, Esq., Hon. Phinehas Allen, and Hon. John C. Williams on the part of the parish. The council met on the 3d of October, and approving Dr. Humphrey's purpose of accepting the Amherst presidency, dissolved his connection with the church in Pittsfield.

"Nothing now remained," says Dr. Humphrey, "but to make arrangements for my removal, and to take those sad farewells, which cost me more anguish of soul than anything in my long life, except the loss of children." These farewells over, he removed to Amherst and was inducted into office, October 15, 1823.

At Amherst his labors were more arduous; and his wisdom and success, if not greater, were more conspicuous than even in Pittsfield. They are too familiar to need repetition here; but a curious instance of his jealous regard for the rights of the college, whose building-up was the crowning glory of his life, is found in the Pittsfield town-records, and is worth preserving. He was taxed upon a little real estate which he retained here, after his removal. The assessment was, in itself, inconsiderable, the aggregate for three years being only twenty-four dollars. But among the persons entirely exempt from taxes, by the laws of Massachusetts, were the presidents, professors, and students of Harvard and Williams Colleges. President Humphrey was struggling to establish a perfect equality of Amherst with the elder colleges; and he conceived that the charter of Amherst, granting to it privileges and immunities usually enjoyed by similar institutions, extended to it their exemption from taxation. He therefore refused payment to the Pittsfield collector, as a matter of principle and precedent. The town, perhaps, still a little vexed at the institution which had robbed it of its pastor, insisted upon the tax; and the matter being referred to arbitrators, it was found that the privilege claimed was strictly confined to the colleges named in the law. The legislature, by some oversight failed to insert it among the immunities specially granted in the charter of Amherst. The tax was therefore paid, and a remedy for the inequality obtained by a supplementary enactment.

While Mr. Humphrey was considering the invitation to Amherst, he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Middlebury College. In 1846, Yale College conferred upon him the further degree of Doctor of Laws.

Having resigned the presidency of Amherst College in 1845, leaving it among the leading institutions of learning in the country, Dr. Humphrey showed the strength and permanence of his affection for the people of his old charge by returning to Pittsfield, to spend the evening of his days among them. He was then but sixty-six years old, and for seventeen years he contributed his counsel and aid, with all the ardor, and almost with the vigor of his youth, to every enterprise, religious or secular, which was proposed for the good of the town. Having thus lived, beloved and venerated, until the year 1861, he died on the 3d of April; and, on the 8th was buried in the beautiful cemetery, which from the day when he took part in its consecration, he had loved to contemplate as his last resting-place.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF 1820—AMENDMENT TO THE THIRD ARTICLE OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS—ABOLITION OF SEATING THE MEETING-HOUSE.

[1820-1836.]

Opinions and votes of Pittsfield regarding the convention—Equality of religious sects before the law—Amendment of the bill of rights offered and advocated by Hon. H. H. Childs—Rejected by the convention—Senatorial apportionment upon a property-basis—Changes in the political-year—Vote of Pittsfield on the several amendments—Reforms in the constitution finally obtained—Curious advertisement of Sylvester Rathbun as Methodist committee-man—Legislative action upon the amendment of the bill of rights—Proposition to change the pews in the meeting-house into slips and to abolish the seating-system—Doctor Humphrey's description of the old system—Names of seating-committees from 1790 to 1830—Evils of the seating-system—Plans for change—Change effected.

THE old difficulties and discontent caused by the preference given by the laws of Massachusetts to societies professing the Congregational faith, and the taxes laid for the support of public worship, continued to disturb religious harmony in Pittsfield, and through nearly all the towns of the commonwealth until the year 1834. In Pittsfield a considerable portion of the Congregationalists, especially those of the democratic party, agreed with members of other denominations in considering the law unjust and impolitic; inconsistent with American institutions, and detrimental to the true interests of the religion which it was intended to protect. In this view the pastor of the church, in 1818, seemed, at least partially, to concur.

Two years afterwards, in 1820, the question whether a convention should be held to revise the Bill of Rights and Constitution of the State was submitted to the people; and Pittsfield gave a hundred and sixteen affirmative votes, with none in the negative.

Very diverse feelings prevailed in different towns in regard to this subject. Thus in Stockbridge there was little or no interest taken in it, while Great Barrington threw twelve yeas to a hundred and three nays; and a similar diversity appeared in the votes of other towns without any obvious reason for it. In the entire state eleven thousand seven hundred and fifty-six votes were given in the affirmative; six thousand five hundred and ninety-three in the negative. In Suffolk county, the vote was twenty-one to one in favor of calling the convention. In Berkshire two to one. Very different views were also entertained by those who agreed that the convention ought to be held, as to the character of the changes which it ought to make. Thus Boston and Pittsfield, which were among the towns giving the largest affirmative majorities, were governed by precisely opposite opinions in regard to the necessity of making radical alterations in the organic laws of the state. Daniel Webster, who was a member of the convention, thought, with his conservative friends, "that it should have a view to the permanency of the constitution, and it would be necessary to change it only for practical purposes. It has been found, in the practice of forty years, that it had served to protect all the essential rights of the citizens; that the great outlines were so established as to need no alteration."

The majority of the people of Pittsfield, on the other hand considered several provisions of the constitution subversive of natural right, and inconsistent with republican institutions. Chief among the obnoxious clauses whose reform, they asked from the convention, were the third article of the Declaration of Rights—under which the laws providing for the support of public worship were framed—and the article in the constitution which required that the General Court, in fixing the number of senators to which the districts should be respectively entitled should be governed by the proportion of taxes paid by the respective districts.

Under the latter article it was found that the county of Suffolk was entitled to one senator for every seven thousand and five hundred of its inhabitants, while the county of Berkshire had only one for every twenty thousand; which was "deemed a gross and cruel inequality." The *Sun* cited the case of an individual in Boston whose property of one million three hundred thousand

dollars, had as much representation in the senate as thirteen hundred independent Berkshire farmers with a property of one thousand dollars each.

The democratic instincts of Pittsfield revolted against these and some other provisions of the constitution which seemed to favor particular classes; and, to carry out their views in the convention the people chose Hon. Nathan Willis, Dr. H. H. Childs and Mr. Jonathan Yale Clark, as their delegates.

The convention met, November 15th; and the question of an amendment of the third article in the Bill of Rights came up for consideration on the 20th of December, when Mr. Phelps of Chester offered a substitute, doing away with all interference on the part of the state with religious affairs other than to protect all sects and persons in the free exercise of their respective modes of worship. Mr. Saltonstall, of Salem, moved a resolution that it was not expedient to make any change in the article except to insert the word "Christian" instead of "Protestant." Between these extremes Dr. Childs proposed to amend the article as follows:

As the happiness of a people and the good order and preservation of civil government, essentially depend upon piety, religion and morality, and as these cannot be generally diffused through a community but by the institution of the public worship of God; and, as it is the inalienable right of every man to render that worship in the mode most consistent with the dictates of his own conscience, no person shall by law be compelled to join, or support, nor be classed with, or associated to, any congregation or religious society whatever. But every person now belonging to any religious society, whether incorporated or unincorporated, shall be considered a member thereof until he shall have separated himself therefrom in the manner hereinafter provided.

And each and every society, or denomination, of Christians in this state shall have and enjoy the same and equal powers, rights and privileges; and shall have power and authority to raise money for the support and maintenance of religious teachers of their respective denominations, and to build and repair houses of public worship, by a tax on the members of any such society only, to be laid by a major vote of the legal voters assembled at any society-meeting, warned and held according to law.

Provided, nevertheless, That if any person shall choose to separate himself from the society or denomination to which he may belong, and shall join himself to another society of the same, or a different, denomination, he shall leave a written notice thereof with the clerk of such

society, and shall thereupon be no longer liable for any further expenses which may be incurred by said society.

And every denomination of Christians, demeaning themselves peaceably, and as good citizens of the commonwealth, shall be equally under the protection of the law. And no subordination of one sect, or denomination, to another, shall ever be established by law.

Dr. Childs subsequently stated that the reason why he was the mover of this resolution was that Rev. Thomas Baldwin, D. D., who was a member of the committee, and had proposed making a motion of similar import, was not in his seat when the subject came up in convention. But, Mr. Phelps withdrawing his proposition, the amendment offered by Dr. Childs was vigorously and ably supported by Dr. Baldwin, Levi Lincoln of Worcester, and other gentlemen of liberal views. Dr. Childs, himself, advocated it to the end with characteristic ardor and no little parliamentary ability. He was, however, met by such leaders of the opposition as Daniel Webster, Samuel Hoar and Josiah Quincy, and, with the conservative sentiment of the convention also arrayed against him, his effort was from the first almost hopeless. Although the liberty he asked in religious matters for the people of the country had long been enjoyed by the citizens of Boston, Salem and Newburyport, they feared to extend it to the people of the country. Perfectly efficient and satisfactory as the voluntary system, in their hands, had proved for the support of public worship, the delegates from the favored towns, with some honorable exceptions, and the conservatives of the interior dared not trust the free-will contributions of country Christians for the support of their own institutions of religion. Indeed, the whole tone of the speakers who opposed a change in the third article indicated that they considered the friends of the voluntary system as the enemies of all religion, and believed that the success of their proposition would result in the decay of all the churches, and the spread of infidelity and immorality throughout the state. And they were followed in these opinions by a majority of the delegates from the country-towns themselves; and among the rest by Nathan Willis, who certainly acted in this instance contrary to the wishes of a majority of his constituents.

The discussion was prolonged, and became probably the most excited which took place in the convention. Many amendments to Dr. Childs's propositions were offered; but it was finally sub-

mitted to a vote in a new draft made by himself, the variations being hardly more than verbal. It was rejected by a vote of one hundred and thirty-six yeas to two hundred nays; General Willis voting in the negative.

The amendment of the third article of the Bill of Rights which the convention finally submitted to the people, made substantially the same provision as to the mode of supporting public worship as already governed legislation in practice.

Dr. Childs and Mr. Clark united heartily with the other liberal members of the convention in their effort to make persons instead of property the basis of representation in the senate. But here again the conservative element proved too powerful for them. The reform was rejected by a vote of one hundred and forty-seven to two hundred and forty-five; General Willis not voting.

Among the alterations in the constitution desired by Pittsfield, in common with other country-towns, was one making the first Wednesday of January the beginning of the political year, and substituting a single session of the General Court in winter for one in the spring and fall respectively: and this amendment was submitted to the people and adopted.

Fourteen articles of amendment were submitted to the people for ratification; and a committee of twenty-eight members, of whom General Willis was one, was appointed to meet on the fourth Wednesday of May, 1821, to ascertain the result.

In the Pittsfield town-meeting the feeble amendment to the third article of the Bill of Rights received but eight ayes, to a hundred and eighty-five nays. The amendment regarding the basis of representation in the senate, although somewhat modified from its first extreme inequality, was still so unsatisfactory that not a single vote was cast in its favor, while two hundred and six were cast in opposition.

A similar temper was shown by the votes thrown upon all the amendments submitted.

On the count of the vote of the entire state it was found that the amendment of the third article of the Bill of Rights, and the article in the constitution concerning the appointment of senators were both defeated; those in favor of reforming those articles altogether, voting against the amendments, together with those who were opposed to any change. The amendment regarding the

alteration in the beginning of the political year was also rejected; but was finally secured in 1831.

After a while, also, the public sentiment of the state, as usual, overtook that of Pittsfield, in regard to the other proposed liberal reforms. In November, 1833, the following amendment to the "third article," having obtained the requisite majorities in the legislature, was ratified by the people:

As the public worship of God, and instructions in piety, religion and morality promote the happiness and prosperity of a people, and the security of a republican government; therefore the several religious societies of this commonwealth, whether corporate or incorporate, at any meeting legally warned and holden for that purpose, shall have the right to elect their pastors or religious teachers, to contract with them for their support, to raise money for erecting and repairing houses for public worship, for the maintenance of religious instruction, and for the payment of necessary expenses; and all persons belonging to any religious society shall be taken and held to be members until they shall file with the clerk of such society a written notice declaring the dissolution of their membership, and thenceforth shall not be liable for any grant or contract which may be thereafter made or entered into by such society; and all religious sects and denominations, demeaning themselves peaceably, and as good citizens of the commonwealth, shall be equally under the protection of the law; and no subordination of any one sect or denomination to another shall ever be established by law.

The amendment was introduced in the legislature of 1832, by the presentation of sixty-five petitions in the house of representatives, on the third day of the session. A few days afterwards Jonathan Allen, 2d, one of the representatives from Pittsfield, introduced similar memorials from that town, signed by Jarvis C. Nichols, Robert Francis, and others. The amendment passed, after a sharp discussion, on the tenth of February, by a vote of three hundred and forty-seven to ninety, receiving the support of all the Pittsfield representatives: Nathan Willis (who had voted against it in convention), Thomas B. Strong, Jonathan Allen, 2d, and Jirah Stearns. In the senate, it received the requisite two-thirds vote, although the judiciary committee, to whom it was referred, reported, through its chairman, Hon. Leverett Saltonstall, that the change was "neither necessary or expedient."

When, having in like manner passed the ordeal of the second trial in the legislature of 1833, it was submitted to the people in

November of that year—it was adopted by the extraordinary vote of thirty-two thousand three hundred and twenty-four yeas, to three thousand two hundred and seventy-two nays : almost ten to one. So great had been the change in less than twelve years.

In 1840, by another amendment, the anomaly of a property-basis for representation in the senate was abolished and the senators were apportioned to the several districts according to their population.

The defeat of the expected reform of the inequality of different sects before the law created intense dissatisfaction among those who were not members of the standing-order, and they in Pittsfield, were loud in their denunciation of the delegate, who, differing from his colleagues, voted against it. The large number of Congregationalists who favored the change, and the fact that Dr. Childs, its champion on the floor of the convention, was of that faith, prevented the old angry division of the town upon the question. The irritated feeling of the dissenters was, however, manifested in various ways, and among others by the following advertisement, which was printed in the *Sun* of January, 1821, with a rude wood-cut of a man kneeling, with a chain around his neck, before another who held the other end :

- *To all whom it may concern :* Having been informed, that there are many persons wishing to become members of the Methodist parish, and free themselves, as far as possible, from the oppression¹ of a religious persecution, which the intolerants of the late convention still think proper to advise the people to submit to ; I therefore take this method of giving notice that I am legally authorized, by said parish, to give the necessary certificates of membership.

January 16th, 1821.

SYLVESTER RATHBUN.

Upon the ratification of the amendment of 1833, the corporate connection of the Congregational society with the town of Pittsfield ceased ; but under the operation of the law passed by the legislature of 1834, all persons previously connected with the parish continued to be so until they filed with the clerk a notice declaring the dissolution of his membership. It also retained all the rights, privileges and immunities which it had previously possessed, except such as were abrogated by the amendment, and the law explanatory of it.

¹It will be remembered that the Methodist parish in Pittsfield had some important immunities and privileges by special charter.

While the effort to secure equality before the law for all religious denominations was going on, a similar endeavor for alterations in the First Parish meeting-house, in the interest of equality within that church, was also in progress.

The pews under the old plan were square and huge; "so that the congregation," said Dr. Humphrey, "might stare at one another instead of looking at the preacher; and high, square play-houses along the sides of the galleries above, were the seats of the children. The boys not content to be so shut up made good use of their penknives in opening such communications as suited their convenience." "It is true," he added, "we had tithing-men then, and they occasionally rapped in the midst of the sermon, and once in a while took a boy by the collar and marched him along to the tithing-man's seat, where he sat, casting an occasional stealthy sidelong glance at his playmates, who were enjoying his duress. It was a bad arrangement of the seats, above and below. But it was generally the same in other places; and there was one thing about it I liked: The aged were seated together nearest to the pulpit, where they could hear better than far down the aisles. It was pleasant for the preacher to see them sitting so near, under the droppings of the sanctuary."

But there were other circumstances than that named by Dr. Humphrey, which were considered by the committee in "seating the meeting-house;" and some of them did not command so unanimous an approval. There were taken into account, social standing, official position, professional occupation, wealth, and that indefinable combination of dress, bearing, and manner of living, which, under the name of "style," is peculiarly obnoxious to the jealousy of a large class in every village community. And it would be to attribute to the committees an almost miraculous exemption from human frailties, did we not add to the list of the considerations which might sometimes influence their allotment, favoritism and its reverse.

Embittered feeling and jealous heart-burnings, of course, arose from a custom like this; and would have done so if angelic wisdom and purity of purpose, instead of human imperfection, had made the assignment. Wounded sensitiveness often prevented the attendance of the more susceptible or irascible upon Divine service. The church-records contain many instances of discipline administered—and generally administered in vain—for the

reclaiming of those who had abandoned both public worship and the communion, exasperated at what they deemed an unjust assignment of their places in the house of God. Frequently a pew was given to more of the class likely to be thus offended, than could be possibly be crowded into it; the committee remarking, "O, it won't matter, they never go to meeting, anyhow."

In the latter days of the system, however, more attention was given to attempts to satisfy all; and the committee gave notice, through the newspapers, asking all persons desirous of seats to specify those which they preferred. But, however sincere and painstaking in their efforts, it was obviously impossible to place every person where he wished to be, or to avoid giving offense to many.

Another evil arising from the old system was the separation of families; and this was specially connected with the huge square pews of which it was not practicable to give one to each family; as it is with the greater economy of space secured by the division of the floor into slips. Indeed, the old system of pews, and that of seating the congregation by a committee, were so inseparable, that it would have been very difficult to abolish the latter without changing the former.

With this statement of the evils connected with the interior arrangement of the meeting-house, the reader will be able to detect without special mention in each case, the reasons for the votes, and other town-action, by which improvement was sought.

In March, 1824, the votes of the town belonging to the Congregational society were called upon to decide whether they would agree to make sale of the pews in their meeting-house as they then were, or previous to said sale, alter them into slips. The wording of the warrant would indicate that a sale of the pews in some form had already been determined upon; but such was not the fact. That was a question still unsettled; and Thomas B. Strong, John Dickinson, Butler Goodrich, Thomas A. Gold and Samuel M. McKay were appointed a committee to estimate the cost of making the proposed change, to devise a plan for selling the slips, if they were built, for the benefit of the society, and to devise also, if practicable, "*a mode to seat the meeting-house; other than the mode heretofore adopted—or for selling the pews in their present form.*"

Two weeks afterward, the committee reported. They submit-

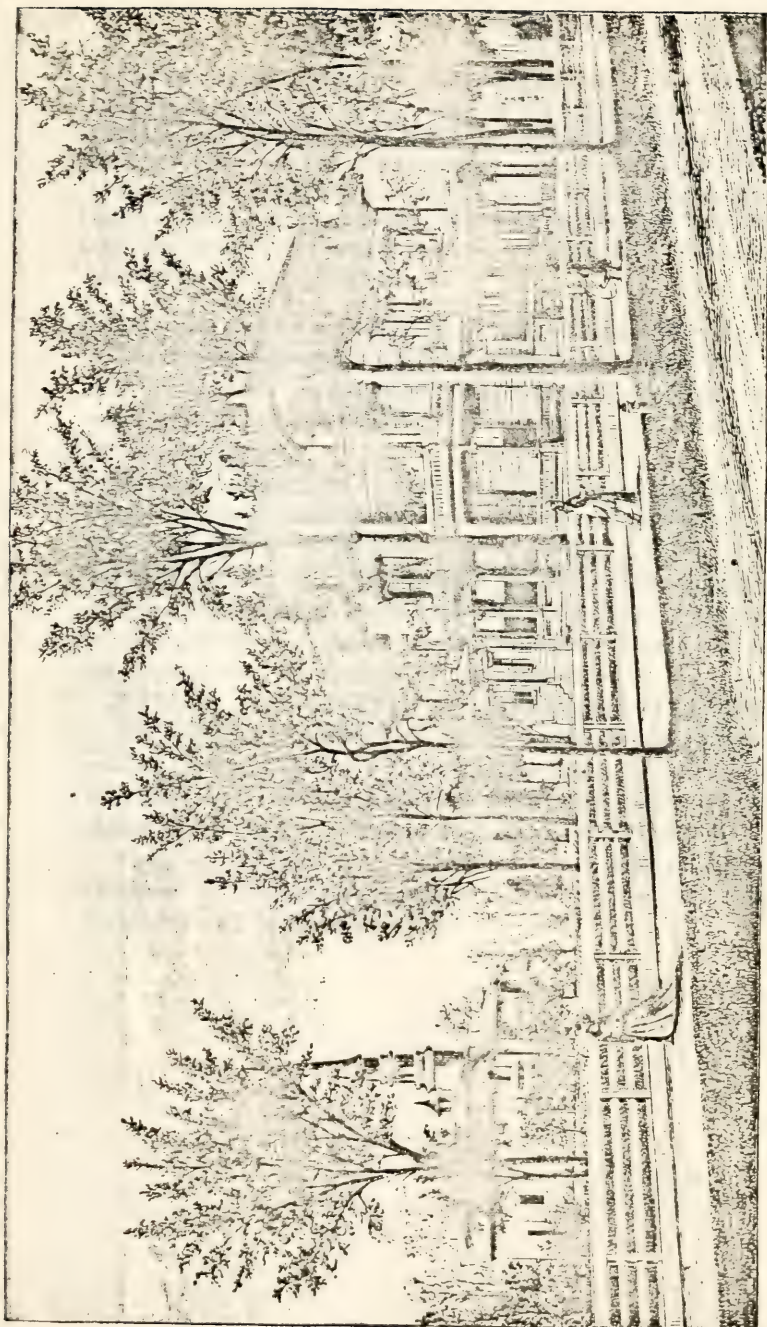
ted a plan for making the pews into slips at an expense which they thought would not exceed three hundred and fifty dollars, and in a manner which would seat a hundred and fifty persons more than could be comfortably accommodated in the old pews. And it was their opinion, if it was the pleasure of the parish to so alter the house, "the slips, or a part of them, should be sold at auction, for a period of five years, for certain sums, payable annually, to be applied toward the support of the pastor." They thought it would be inexpedient to sell the pews in the old form, as there were not enough of them to accommodate separately all the families in the parish.

They found it beyond their power to devise any plan for seating the meeting-house which would, in their opinion, be better than the old; but they thought that the substitution of slips—"even if they were not sold, but seated—would contribute much to the convenience, comfort, and eventually, the harmony of the parish." Still, as the project was new to a majority of the parish, the committee proposed a postponement of its consideration in order that they might become better acquainted with it. Their advice was accepted, and the meeting ordered their report, with the plan attached, to be conspicuously posted.

The next year the subject again came up, but the parish was still unprepared to act upon it, and Phinehas Allen, Hosea Merrill, Charles Churchill, S. M. McKay, and Jonathan Allen were directed to examine into it, and report to an adjourned meeting. The meeting was held; but there is no further allusion in the records to the change of pews into slips until March, 1830, when it was considered with a deliberation that indicates the interest which it excited, and the difference of opinion concerning it.

The moderator, Joseph Merrick, nominated a committee—Josiah Bissell, Phinehas Allen, and Henry Hubbard—who, having been formally approved by the meeting, nominated as a committee to consider the article in the warrant regarding the proposed alteration: Nathan Willis, Simeon Brown, Ezekiel R. Colt, S. M. McKay, Curtis T. Fenn, E. M. Bissell, Solomon L. Russell, and Henry H. Childs.

In September following, the committee reported three methods of disposing of the question. The third, which was adopted by the meeting, is the only one described in the record; and is as follows:



RESIDENCE OF JAMES H. HINSDALE, ESQ.

The third method is the one at present in force ; viz.: To seat the house by a committee, under the delegated authority of the parish ; with the merits of which the parish are sufficiently familiar. Should this method be adopted, the committee recommend that the seating-committee be instructed to preserve ; as far as possible, the present order of seats and seat-mates. This they believe to be very important ; for, should any changes be made, the hazard of producing dissatisfaction will be very great.

And thus, so late as 1830, the parish, although it made a step in advance by changing its square and cumbrous pews into neat and commodious slips, nevertheless deliberately adhered to the antiquated practice of seating the congregation by the allotment of a committee.

Much dissatisfaction, however, continued to prevail, and complaint was made that Pittsfield was far behind neighboring towns which had already adopted the desired change. Dr. O. S. Root, the next year, in behalf of himself and some other young men, annoyed by the bad eminence conferred upon them by their seats in the gallery, made known their grievances through the newspapers, and were assigned places in the pews below.

Finally, in November, 1836, nearly two years after the abolition of the compulsory support of public worship—the practice of seating the congregation by a committee was entirely done away with, and the pews were leased at a fixed price, the precedence of choice being sold at auction ; a method which still prevails.

And thus ended the long contest to do away with arbitrary distinctions of class in the house of God ; leaving only such as inevitably and incidentally arise.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BERKSHIRE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF AGRICULTURE AND MANUFACTURES.

[1807-1830.]

Agricultural societies in Europe and America prior to the Berkshire—The just claims of the Berkshire society to precedence—Evidence and acknowledgment of its beneficial influence throughout the country—Biographical sketch of Elkanah Watson—His removal to Pittsfield and exhibition of merino sheep under the Elm—He advocates the establishment of an agricultural society and the introduction of merino sheep—Independent cattle-show in 1810—Its influence upon Berkshire sheep-culture—The society incorporated—Its first cattle-show—Premiums, and prophetic address by Elkanah Watson—Berkshire system of agricultural fairs gradually developed—Ingenious device to interest women in them—Organization of the society's work—Plowing-match and viewing-committees introduced—Marked effect of the society's efforts upon Berkshire agriculture—Pecuniary difficulties—Contributions of Pittsfield—Aid granted by the Commonwealth—Efforts to make the shows migratory successfully resisted—Death of Mr. Watson—Ode by William Cullen Bryant.

WHEN in the year 1807, the idea of founding, in Berkshire county, a society for the promotion of agriculture and manufactures, happily occurred to Elkanah Watson, societies for a similar purpose were by no means a new thing in the world. The Society of the Improvers of the Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland was formed as early as 1723. The Highland Agricultural Society, which afterwards, in 1784, became national as the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, was incorporated in 1777, and early established an annual show of live-stock, implements of husbandry and other articles of interest to farmers. In 1777, the Bath and West of England Agricultural Society was organized, and immediately established cattle-shows. The success of these institutions was so remarkable, that similar organizations of a local character soon spread all over

Great Britain; and in due time national boards and societies, formed under royal patronage, assumed the lead in promoting the cause of agriculture in the United Kingdom.

The history of these bodies is still related with just pride, by British writers, and to them is attributed in great part, the marvelous perfection to which the art of agriculture has been brought in every part of their country.

Societies of the same kind were also organized in France, and their annual shows were distinguished by the pomps and splendors characteristic of that nation.

In America, also, state-societies for the same object were formed early. That of South Carolina dates from 1784. The Philadelphia society, formed the following year, seems to have had something of a national character; for the *Pittsfield Chronicle* of March, 1790, states that it had just awarded a gold medal to a Rhode Island farmer. In 1791, the celebrated New York Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Manufactures and Arts, was organized by Ezra L'Hommedieu, Chancellor Robert R. Livingston, Samuel DeWitt, Alexander McComb, and many other respectable and patriotic citizens of that state. It was incorporated in 1793, and accomplished much in behalf of the interests which it was intended to foster. The Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture was incorporated in 1792, and diffused much valuable and practical information throughout the state, by means of a series of papers known as the *Agricultural Repository*, and afterwards by a publication styled the *Massachusetts Journal of Agriculture*.

These associations labored assiduously to obtain information upon agricultural topics, by the importation of the best European treatises upon farming; by experiments which their members made, often at great personal expense, and by such other means as were within their reach. The results of their reading and experience were compared and discussed in frequent meetings, much after the manner of those recently instituted by the Board of Agriculture in Massachusetts; and their proceedings, published in pamphlet-form, or in the newspapers, were scattered broadcast through New York, Massachusetts, and all the more favored states, conveying a vast amount of instruction.

However it may have been with the masses, these papers show that there were then many educated and clear-headed farmers,

whose knowledge of their art, at least as to principles, has been little bettered in those who have had sixty years of added investigation and observation. And, although much jealousy of book-farming was manifested in the great body of practical farmers, thought was awakened, and even among those most prejudiced against innovation, more intelligence was employed in cultivation, and essential improvements gradually won their way to adoption. Since that era, and much through the influence of organized societies, some truths have doubtless been discovered, some fallacies detected and abandoned. Some changes for the better have taken place in matters of practical detail; vast improvements have been made in the implements of agriculture; more valuable breeds of cattle, richer varieties of fruit, grain and vegetables, have been introduced. But the farmer, well-read in the recent literature of his profession, if he should peruse the essays and discussions of sixty or seventy years ago, would be surprised to find how little positive advance has been made in agricultural science; how few questions which were then, or have since been propounded, have been absolutely determined. There are many writers and speakers, at this day, upon agricultural topics who present as many points obnoxious to modern criticism, as are to be found in L'Hommedieu, DeWitt, and other leaders of the New York Society.

For the further advance of the interests committed to their charge, the state-societies awarded premiums, medals and diplomas for superior farms, and for excellence in particular products. Distinguished services to the arts or to agriculture, by discoveries, inventions, importations, or otherwise, were rewarded in the same way.

In 1793, the New York Society recommended the forming of county-organizations, whose members should be *ex facto* members of the parent body. It offered to such counties as adopted the proposition, the nucleus of an agricultural library; but there were few responses. Dutchess county, however, certainly formed a respectable society, and held a series of successful cattle-shows,¹

¹The Kingston *Ulster County Plebian*, in its notice of the Berkshire cattle-show of 1810, has the following paragraph, which seems to claim for the Dutchess County Society the honor of having the first cattle-show in America: "The laudable example exhibited by our sister county of Dutchess in instituting a society for agricultural fairs, has been adopted in various parts

although both were abandoned after a few years, and the latter were not resumed until 1834.

In Pennsylvania, there were several county agricultural societies which held annual exhibitions. In 1805, "a society for the encouragement of domestic manufactures, economy, and the agriculture of our country" was formed in Orleans county, Vermont, and offered three premiums for woolen cloths "of not less than a coat's cloth to be manufactured that season within the circuit of the society." It also recommended that its members should disuse foreign woolen cloths, especially the fine, as soon as may be; and that, so far as practicable, each member should at the next meeting appear clothed in our own manufactures. It moreover determined that "the spirits to be procured for the future refreshment of the society should be of the distillation of our own country."

An association of Middlesex (Massachusetts) farmers, formed in 1794, was incorporated in 1803, as "The Western Society of Middlesex Farmers."

The Kennebec (Maine) Agricultural Society, organized in 1800, was incorporated in 1801.

Thus it will be seen that, contrary to the tradition which strangely obtained popular credence and long remained uncorrected, the Berkshire was by no means the first agricultural society established in America; nor did it hold the first exhibition of cattle. But these are honors which it can well afford to forego. That in which it justly claims precedence is better than mere primogeniture.

The pre-existing organizations had labored faithfully and wisely. The state-societies especially, had achieved very valuable results; but their membership was limited, and chiefly from the richer and more cultivated classes. Their leaders were often eminent statesmen, merchants or professional gentlemen, although generally farmers as well. They held their meetings at the metropolitan centers of their respective states; working upon, rather than with and among, their fellow-agriculturists. These disadvantages were early recognized by the central societies, which accordingly recommended the organization of county branches in order to diffuse their spirit and generalize their oper-

of the country with a zeal that insures the most extensive benefits. Berkshire was among the first and most active in this praiseworthy competition, and her exertions promise to realize the most sanguine expectations."

ations. But both the state-societies and the county—whether formed under their auspices or independently—failed to obtain any strong hold upon the popular heart; and they accomplished comparatively little in elevating the mass of the farming community intellectually, socially, or indeed economically. They created no great holiday for the people; no fellowship of the farmer's craft; and thus they missed two of the most potent means of elevating the art of husbandry. In the language of the founder of the Berkshire Society, "they depended too much upon types, and did not address the interests and sentiments of the people." Their approaches were too direct. They sought to influence their humbler fellows almost entirely through the cold medium of the press; neglecting appeals to the imagination, to social sentiment, and to that love of pageantry which characterized the period. If they sought to arouse the spirit of emulation by the offer of premiums, they missed much of the additional stimulus which the Berkshire Society provided in the character of these rewards of merit, and the manner in which they were bestowed. It remained for the Berkshire farmers—under the leadership of a gentleman singularly qualified by nature, education and social position—to work out a model which proved so well adapted to its purposes that it has been followed by all the county agricultural societies in America, and has exercised a controlling influence over the operations of the state-organizations.

The obligations of the country to the Berkshire Society, in this regard have, from the first, been freely and gratefully acknowledged. We need quote but a few of the instances in which this acknowledgment has been expressed.

On the Fourth of July, 1815, the following toast was given at Lexington, in Middlesex, in which county the Association of Husbandmen, which has been alluded to, already existed: "The Berkshire Association for the Encouragement of American Manufactures: May similar institutions become the bulwark of our national independence; and, under the patronage of our government, teach Great Britain that American resources and American industry are competent to the exigencies of the United States."

In 1817, the Massachusetts Society for the Promotion of Agriculture acknowledged the value of the Berkshire model, and bore testimony to the esteem in which it was held throughout the

state by announcing its first cattle-show as to be held after the plan of those established at Pittsfield.

In 1821, Hon. Jonathan Allen, in his address to the Berkshire Society, quoted the following paragraph from an oration delivered in 1820, before the Hampshire, Hampden and Franklin Society: "The Massachusetts Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, a similar society in Pennsylvania, and a few others, were early organized; but we witnessed little of their effects, and there still existed, among us, an extreme apathy, until our brethren in Berkshire, few in numbers, weak in funds, and apparently feeble in means, by their spirited and well-adapted measures, became the honorable and proximate cause of the interest which is now felt, and of the efforts which are now making, throughout the Union. To that society, we are unquestionably indebted; and let the obligation be forever remembered and acknowledged."

Thomas Gold, Esq., in his address as president of the society, in 1816, said: "The respectable State of New York has adopted the society as their model; and they are forming several institutions resembling this. And, within a few days, we have had an application from the State of Kentucky, requesting our assistance to enable them to form a society like our own."

Thus it will be seen that, in less than twelve years from the first cattle-show under the Old Elm, and the other initial movements, which we are about to relate, the Berkshire Agricultural Society was recognized throughout the country as having inaugurated a new era in organizations for the improvement of American agriculture.

In accomplishing this happy end, the most effective means was the substitution of the festival known as "The Cattle-Show and Agricultural Fair," for the occasional meager and unattractive exhibitions which few witnessed, and for the unexciting system of premiums, for which few contended, and which were offered for a very limited number of products. Interesting and pleasing to all classes from its first establishment, this holiday, by gradual accretions of alluring features, became to the farmer, all, and more than all, that commencement-day is to the college-graduate. Fixed in date and place, the cattle-show and fair, once every year, turned the attention of the whole community to the interests of agriculture. It was the grand harvest-home of a region in which almost every man was to some extent a farmer. In it

there was some pleasure and profit for all ages, for every class and for both sexes ; and it was enjoyed as no other festival—not even the “Glorious Fourth,” or, it is hardly an exaggeration to add, Thanksgiving—ever was.

To the practical farmer, especially, in addition to its delights and excitements, it brought both material and intellectual profit. It collected for his examination the latest importations and inventions in the implements of his art, the best blooded stock, the latest varieties of seeds and plants. It was used to some extent for the purposes of traffic. But, more and better than all, it drew the husbandman out of his seclusion into contacts which enlarged and liberalized his mind. In conversation with his fellows, as well as in addresses and reports treating upon subjects of immediate interest to him, he found abundant food for thought—to be compared, on winter evenings, with books and pamphlets, and to be well digested in his lonely fields. In many ways his autumn holiday made the farmer more proud of his profession, while it rendered the profession more worthy of pride.

The gentleman to whom the county of Berkshire owes the honor of furnishing to the country the model for this most beneficial institution, was Elkanah Watson, a member of the New York Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Manufactures and Art, who purchased the farm and mansion of Henry Van Schaack, and removed to Pittsfield in 1807.

Mr. Watson was born at Plymouth, January 22, 1758, and was a descendant of Governor Edward Winslow. In 1773, he was apprenticed to John Brown, an energetic and enterprising merchant of Providence, and afterwards the founder of Brown University. Mr. Brown was also an ardent and active patriot, and, having captured and burned the British schooner *Gaspee*, was arrested and carried to Boston, which was then in possession of General Gates. In connection with this affair, young Watson, although not enlisted in continental service, saw some pretty warm patriotic work. In 1777, at the age of nineteen, he went in charge of treasure to the amount of nearly fifty thousand dollars, sent by the Brown firm to their correspondents in Charleston, S. C.—an eventful journey through a very dangerous country, in which he kept his eyes open and his mind active.

Upon attaining his majority in 1779, Mr. Watson, having engaged in some mercantile affair with the Brown Brothers,

went to France, where he remained until 1784. For the greater part of this time he was engaged in commercial business; but he spent two years at Rennes, perfecting himself in the French language, and also found opportunity to travel extensively in Holland, Belgium and Great Britain, studying attentively whatever was worth seeing, and especially the national industries. In 1784, he returned to America, and, after spending more than a year in examining different sections of the country, settled upon a plantation in North Carolina. Two years of plantation-life were more than sufficient to satisfy him: of all modes of existence this was the least adapted to his restless mind; and in 1788, he returned to Providence. In the same year curiosity led him to the old Dutch city of Albany, which in 1789, he made his home. "At this period," says his biographer, "commenced his efforts and labors in projecting and advocating various subjects of local and general improvements of the most diversified character and objects, which were continued to the end of his life." He had, from his earliest youth, been an observant and thoughtful traveler. He had sought the acquaintance of the noblest men of his time, and had been greatly favored by circumstances in so doing. Washington, Franklin, Adams, Schuyler and Livingston were among the sages who gave him their counsel. And no fact, no opportunity, offered itself in vain. From paving and lighting the streets of Albany up to projecting the grand system of canals, which had so large a share in making New York the Empire state, some plan or effort for the public good always occupied his thoughts.¹

When, in 1807, he removed to Pittsfield, his conduct was marked by the same characteristics, varied in their manifestation by the changed field of action. "It was," says his son, "in accordance with a long-cherished desire, that he retired from the city in pursuit of rural occupations and felicity, and, at the age of fifty, commenced his agricultural career. His only error in the adoption of this pursuit, was, as he himself said, that he embraced it at too late a period in life: after his habits and feelings had been moulded by a long residence in cities."

This very fact, however, much as it may have impaired his suc-

¹ For most of the facts previously stated regarding Mr. Watson, we are indebted to a very interesting volume entitled *Men and Times of the Revolution, or Memoirs of Elkanah Watson*: Edited by his son, Winslow C. Watson.

cess as a practical farmer, rendered him, perhaps, better fitted to introduce the improvements and reforms which he effected in the agriculture of Berkshire. Mr. Watson's agricultural learning, his well-conducted experiments, his liberality and enterprise in conducting his business, may have lacked something to make his farming profitable; but to the tiller of the soil, bred to the plow, familiar with the details and inured to the toils of a farmer's life, they might, and did, afford lessons whose costly tuition he was himself unable to pay, but whose teachings were of untold value to him. The enlarged and quickened thought, the fruit of an energetic life and wide observation, which Mr. Watson, and after him, Major Melville, brought from abroad, combined happily with the practical common-sense and homely experience of the Berkshire farmers, who, as we have shown in a former chapter, were also not unprepared to receive it, by some knowledge of the science of agriculture as taught in books.

For the few years preceding that in which Mr. Watson removed to Pittsfield, the attention of the New York Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Arts and Manufactures was turned specially and very earnestly to the improvement of the breeds of sheep in relation to the fineness of their fleece, and also to its manufacture into cloths. Mr. Watson, as a member of that society, was deeply imbued with its spirit in this respect; and among his first acts as a farmer, was the purchase of two fine merinos—a ram, and a ewe,—the first of that breed which were ever brought to New England. These he exhibited, in the fall of 1807, on the green under the Old Elm.

"Many farmers, and even females," says Mr. Watson, "were attracted to this humble exhibition;" and, from this lucky incident, he "reasoned that, if two animals are capable of exciting so much attention, what would be the effect of a display on a large scale, of different animals." "The farmers present assented to this reasoning, and thus became acquainted with the speaker," who, it will be remembered, had been but a few months resident among them. "From that moment," said he in 1820, "to the present hour, agricultural fairs and cattle-shows, with all their connections, have predominated in my mind, greatly to the prejudice of my private affairs."

Mr. Watson quoted the example and influence of the great European fairs and cattle-shows, as an encouragement for the

establishment of that which he proposed in Berkshire; but he does not tell us what hints he derived from them in forming it. It would have been strange if he had not learned much, and profited much from them.¹ But whatever transatlantic features Mr. Watson incorporated into his agricultural festival, we shall find to have been thoroughly Americanized; so much so, that it may be rightly considered an independent and original creation. We proceed to a detailed account of the organization of the society.

During the winter following Mr. Watson's little exhibition under the Elm, he addressed the farmers of Berkshire, through the newspapers, "urging the spread of the merino sheep," which he considered invaluable for the hilly districts of New England. In furtherance of the same object, several gentlemen from different parts of the county, met, on the 30th of January, by his invitation, at the tavern of Captain Pepoon, and having elected Simon Larned president, and John W. Hulbert secretary, passed resolutions favoring the introduction of the Spanish breeds of sheep, and the establishment of agricultural societies. And, in order to make their work practical, they further resolved that an agricultural society should be established in the county of Berkshire and be called "The Berkshire Agricultural Society." To carry out this vote the meeting appointed Elkanah Watson and Alexander Ely of Pittsfield, William Walker of Lenox, Wolcott Hubbel of Lanesboro, and Nathaniel Bishop of Richmond, to report at a future session the name of a suitable person in each town of the county, to form a committee of correspondence.

The embryo society then adjourned to the ninth of the next

¹In the *Massachusetts Agricultural Journal* for 1824, Mr. John Lowell, one of the editors, in reply to a correspondent who was indignant that he had intimated in a previous number of that magazine, that the idea of agricultural shows did not originate in Berkshire—said, in substance, "that, although the idea had originated in Europe, he had always admitted that to the Berkshire Society belonged the unquestioned honor of introducing it here. But he had personally seen and read, before any cattle-show was dreamed of in America, the proceedings of English and French shows at Smithfield, Bath, Lewes, Caen, and Paris, exceeding in splendor any of ours at present (1824). The French excel us, on such occasions, in speeches and dancing; but we believe we are the only people who combine religion with these public festivals. Yet we would cling as zealously as any to the usages of our ancestors in this respect." In another article Mr. Lowell styles the Berkshire Society, "the nurse of agriculture in Massachusetts."

May: and we hear no more of it. But, in the *Sun* of May 28th, Mr. Watson published an eloquent "Appeal to the Inhabitants of Berkshire." He stated that, having been a member of the New York State Agricultural Society, where the subject had been agitated by the patriotic Livingston, his mind had been deeply impressed with the practicability, and infinite importance, of introducing the Spanish sheep. When he removed to Pittsfield—"foreseeing a heavy cloud evidently on the point of gathering over our land, and the probability that we should shortly be compelled to seek within ourselves a supply of articles of the first necessity, especially woollens—he made every suitable effort to awaken public attention to that important source of national wealth." He explained the advantages of agricultural societies very clearly; said that several of the states had already experienced great benefits from them; and declared that to such institutions England owed her surprising superiority over other nations in agriculture.

He informed the farmers that, in February, he had obtained the refusal, for a limited time, of sixty-seven full and half-blooded Spanish rams—the whole of Chancellor Livingston's spare flock—intending to give over the refusal to individuals or to an agricultural society in the county, "in the pleasing expectation of seeing extensive woollen-factories rise up in different parts of the county, the basis being first laid in an increasing supply of an improving raw material." But the languor attending the organization of the society so discouraged him, that he had given up his bargain. He announced, nevertheless, that he had hazarded the purchase of forty of the flock, which he offered to any who should make application to Colonel Danforth, postmaster of Pittsfield, before the fourth of July. Colonel Danforth was to retain one dollar from the amount paid for each sheep, and to pass it over to an agricultural society, if one was formed that summer, as the nucleus of a fund for premiums upon broadcloth made in the county from the wool of these sheep, and those bred from them.

Mr. Watson promised that the rams should be delivered to Colonel Danforth's order, on the first of September, and eight or ten more from his own flock on the first of October. This would make two for each town, and he estimated that, with proper management, there would be about five thousand sheep from this

source alone, in the county, the next spring; preparatory for a second cross with full-blooded rams, which could probably be procured the ensuing season. The second year sufficient wool for extensive manufactories of superfine broadcloths might be produced in Berkshire. This wool, he thought, would be superior in quality to the imported, as the best of foreign growth was retained for home-consumption. Finally, the product of Berkshire wool would so increase in quantity beyond the means of manufacturing in the county, that there would be a considerable surplus, to be sent profitably to market.

The address, of which the foregoing is an abstract, exhibits the arguments by which Mr. Watson constantly urged his favorite schemes of sheep-culture and a county agricultural society upon the Berkshire public; and they met with great success, although to his ardent mind it seemed to come slowly.

Mr. Watson's biographer states that at this time he stood almost alone in advocating his projects, "exposed to the shafts of ridicule and satire." But he does not seem to have suffered more in this respect than usually falls to the lot of the projector of any new institution. We have, to be sure, seen a newspaper-article in which some correspondent exposed his clumsy wit in an attempt to burlesque Mr. Watson's project, by a proposition to offer premiums for an improved breed of turkeys: a suggestion which has long since been carried out, and which, if it had been seriously made, would doubtless have been welcomed by Mr. Watson. But this article stands almost alone in the columns of the *Sun* and *Reporter*, which were crowded with frequent arguments for, and eulogiums upon, the new scheme.

Mr. Watson had much more to fear from apathy than from hostility or ridicule. Yet even this was far from universal. The gentlemen who participated in the meetings of 1808 were heartily sincere in the feelings which they expressed, and sympathized with him warmly, although with a zeal not quite equal to his own. The people generally of Berkshire and Pittsfield—as is their wont with new projects to this day—turned over his propositions and arguments in their minds for a couple of years, and, when satisfied of their value, entered into his plans with enthusiasm and vigor.

In the *Sun* of August 8, 1810, appeared the following appeal,

signed by twenty-six of the most respectable farmers and intelligent gentlemen of the county:—

BERKSHIRE CATTLE-SHOW.

“The multiplication of useful animals is a common blessing to mankind.”—
Washington.

TO FARMERS.

The subscribers take the liberty to address you on a momentous subject, which, in all probability, will materially affect the agricultural interest of this county. Annual fairs, or shows of cattle, we are informed, are found in many European countries, particularly in Great Britain, of great importance, at fixed periods and places, at which point there is generally a large collection of the most intelligent farmers, exhibiting a show of prime animals. Some in view of obtaining prize-premiums, others in a view of sale or exchange, by which means the breeds have greatly improved, to the general benefit of the community. The same advantages have also resulted from a similar practice in several parts of the United States; particularly in certain districts in Pennsylvania, and in Dutchess county in the State of New York. Being fully impressed with the belief that a like practice in this county will have the same good effects, and in a hope of being instrumental in commencing a plan so useful in its consequences, we propose to exhibit on the square in the village of Pittsfield, on Monday the first of October next, from nine o'clock to three, bulls, oxen, steers, and other neat cattle; merino sheep of the different grades, as well as other improved breeds; hogs or swine of different breeds.

Farmers in this county or vicinity are respectfully invited to attend this first exhibition, with such useful animals as they see proper. It is hoped that this essay will not be confined to the present year, but will lead to permanent annual cattle-shows; and that an incorporated agricultural society will emanate from this meeting, that will hereafter be possessed of funds sufficient to award premiums, and thus promote an amelioration of valuable breeds of domestic animals.

Samuel H. Wheeler, Calvin Hubbel, William Beard, Uri Bradley, Josiah Wilcox, Joel Bradley, Peter B. Curtis, Joseph Farnam, Ebenezer Buck, Charles Morse, Daniel Brown, John Wells, Jr., Hicok Hubbel, John Farnam, Wolcott Hubbel, Rosswel Root, Erastus Sackett, Solomon Sackett, Joseph Shearer, Lodowick Stanton, Elkanah Watson, John B. Root, Titus Goodman, Joseph Merrick, Samuel D. Colt, Thomas B. Strong.

The last eleven signers of this call were citizens of Pittsfield: Messrs. Morse, Brown and Wells were of Cheshire; the others

of Lanesboro. The exhibition took place at the appointed time; and notwithstanding its limited character, and the meagerness of pleasing accessories, it attracted a large attendance of the principal farmers from the surrounding country: and, without the incitement of premiums, the show of animals was respectable; comprising three hundred and eighty-three sheep, seven bulls, a hundred and nine oxen, nine cows, three heifers, two calves, and one boar; a large proportion of which were blooded stock. Among the more valuable exhibitions were a young Holderness bull which Mr. Watson had imported in 1808, and which was accompanied by some of its stock; and there was also some of the small-boned, short-legged pigs, of which the same gentleman had, in the same year, brought a pair from Duchess county, and which gradually supplanted the old slab-sided, plowshare breed which previously rooted in the soil of Berkshire. In the three hundred and eighty-three sheep, there were thirteen entries of exhibitors: Merrick and Colt (Joseph Merrick and Samuel D. Colt), two hundred and eighty-four; Root and Chappell (John B. Root and Richard S. Chappell), thirty-six; D. Humphries (Colonel Humphries of Poughkeepsie), eleven; Root and Willard (George B. Rodney Root and Josiah Willard), twenty-one; Daniel Couch, six; Campbell and Goodwin (David Campbell and Joseph Goodwin), four; Jonathan Chapman, four; Samuel H. Wheeler, two; Arthur Schofield, Charles Morse, Levi Chittenden, Benjamin Luce, Asahel Buck, one each.

Of the exhibitors in the general department — other than sheep — there were, from Chatham, N. Y., one; Canaan, N. Y., one; Pittsfield, seven; Lanesboro, fourteen; Adams, three; Cheshire, one; Richmond, one; Dalton, one. Of the exhibitors of sheep, Poughkeepsie furnished one, Pittsfield eight, Lanesboro one, Richmond one, unknown three.

The announcement of the Pittsfield Fair, and afterwards of its marked success, excited a wide interest, not only in Massachusetts, but in all the neighboring states; especially in New England, where it was the first essay of the kind.

At home, in Berkshire, it had the desired effect of giving a new impulse to the new sheep-culture. Immediately after the show, we find Root and Chappell, Mr. Watson and others, advertising merinos for sale; John B. Root advertising for persons to board from ten to five hundred sheep by the year; and a general

interest in the subject of wool and woollen manufactures everywhere manifested.

While the fair was in progress, Hon. Jonathan Allen was in Lisbon purchasing merinos; an enterprise in which he had remarkable good fortune. Spain was at that moment agitated by the intestine wars engendered by the French revolution, and confiscations ruled the hour. Among the property seized were many of the superb flocks which had long been the pride of Andalusia, New Castile, and Estramadura. These, the Juntas administering the government—King Ferdinand being detained a prisoner by Napoleon—sent in immense numbers to clog the markets of Portugal.

From this source many of the finest sheep in Spain found their way to Great Britain and the United States. Among those sent to Lisbon were six thousand from the flocks of the Count of Montaco, of which Mr. Allen purchased one hundred.

Regarding the quality of these sheep, there is still preserved the certificate of the Spanish Consul at Lisbon, stating—on the authority of the secretary of the governmental Junta, of Estramadura—that they were of the fine Transhumante¹ breed, from the confiscated flocks of the Count of Montaco, whose stock was of the highest credit in Spain, and also held in great estimation abroad.

Mr. Allen had a very stormy return voyage, in which he lost many of his sheep, and was himself so very sea-sick that he begged of the captain to throw him overboard. But, of those which he saved, he sold a sufficient number in Boston to defray the whole cost of his venture, some of the bucks bringing one thousand dollars each.

Forty remained, with which he returned to Pittsfield. Here he purchased of Titus Goodman, "vendee of David Campbell," the farm near Coltsville, afterwards owned by Phillips Merrill. Taking up his residence upon this beautiful, valuable and extensive farm, he entered with zeal into the business of sheep-raising, and contributed largely to the introduction of the fine-wool sheep.

In 1809, Samuel D. Colt was appointed agent for the sale of

¹ Transhumante, or traveling race; so called because, although carefully sheltered in winter, they were in summer kept almost constantly traveling for pasturage; being distinguished in this respect from the Estantes, which do not migrate, and are of a somewhat inferior quality.

Clermont merino rams for the State of Massachusetts. The animals were to be delivered in Pittsfield on the fifteenth of August, the purchasers selecting from the flock in the order of their applications. The stock of these rams was represented to be imported from France by Robert R. Livingston, who, when minister to that country, selected them from its best national flock. Mr. Colt's large exhibition at the cattle-show of 1810 indicated the spirit with which he entered upon this enterprise. Indeed, it was the foundation of an exceedingly prosperous business in buying, raising and selling of sheep, which was conducted for many years by himself and his son Robert, in which they proved themselves among the most able and successful business men of the county.

Other farmers entered with zest into the raising of the improved breeds of sheep, and many more became interested in agricultural societies. And thus, within three years of Mr. Watson's humble show under the Old Elm, the objects which he there set himself to accomplish were in a fair tide toward success. In fact, if there had been any dispiriting indifference regarding these objects previous to the success of 1810, after it public feeling seemed likely to rush to the opposite extreme. One enthusiastic correspondent, at least, proposed to establish, at Pittsfield, a grand fair, like those of Europe, for all the four states which approach each other at this point. He showed the great advantages of this location as a center, and would even have premiums offered annually for the agricultural and manufacturing products of the whole Union. And, indeed, the premiums offered at the early fairs of the Berkshire Society were, to a great extent, open to competitors outside the county and the state.

While the cattle-show of 1810 was in progress, it was determined, at a meeting of the leading farmers in attendance, that the institution should be made permanent, and, for that purpose, to apply to the next legislature for an act incorporating a county agricultural society. In accordance with this action, the legislature granted a charter to Elkanah Watson, Ezekiel Bacon, John B. Root, and Thomas B. Strong of Pittsfield, Caleb Hyde of Lenox, John Chamberlin of Dalton, and Samuel H. Wheeler of Lanesboro, with such as might be joined with them, as "the Berkshire Agricultural Society for the Promotion of Agriculture

and Manufactures." The society was authorized to hold property whose annual income should not exceed five thousand dollars, and was invested with the powers requisite to carry out its objects.

The first meeting was held on the 1st of August, 1811, when a code of by-laws was adopted. One of these required that there should be two meetings of the society annually; one at Lenox on the first Wednesday of the spring session of the supreme court, the other at Pittsfield on the last Tuesday of September. The latter date was also that of the cattle-show and fair, which it was provided, should be held in Pittsfield and should include "an exhibition of neat cattle, sheep, hogs, all kinds of seeds, roots, samples of compost, manufactures, patent-rights, improvements in agriculture, machinery, and useful inventions of all kinds."

Another by-law provided that new members should be elected by ballot, and, under this rule, the following were chosen: William Walker, Jonathan Allen, Timothy Childs, H. H. Childs, Hosea Merrill, R. S. Chappell, David Campbell, Josiah Bissell, Rossell (Roswell) Root, Arthur Scholfield, S. D. Colt, Joseph Merrick, Thomas Gold, Lemuel Pomeroy, James Brown, John Dickinson, and Oliver Partridge Dickinson. In September this rule was repealed, and the secretary and treasurer were authorized to receive members who signed the constitution and by-laws, and paid the admission fee of one dollar.

The officers of the society, chosen at its first meeting, were Elkanah Watson, president; William Walker and S. H. Wheeler, vice-presidents; Caleb Hyde, corresponding secretary; Thomas B. Strong, recording secretary; John B. Root, treasurer; Joseph Shearer, Ezekiel Bacon, and Jonathan Allen, trustees. At a subsequent meeting, Thomas Gold, S. D. Colt, Roswell Root, David Campbell, Arthur Scholfield and James Brown were added to the list of trustees.

In the *Sun* of August 10th, Elkanah Watson as president, and Messrs. Shearer and Allen, a committee of the trustees, announced that the society had determined to hold a cattle-show on an extensive scale, at Pittsfield, on the last Tuesday and Wednesday of the ensuing September. They stated that, should funds be provided in season, premiums would be given; but, in the meanwhile, they advised farmers and manufacturers to select and prepare choice specimens of their respective products, and machinists to have ready models of useful inventions. All members of

the society were requested to appear clad in American manufactures.

In the last issue of the *Sun* previous to the days appointed for the show, premiums were offered of ten dollars each for the best bull, and for the best full-blooded merino lamb; five dollars each for oxen, cows, heifers, sheep of mixed blood, common sheep and swine.

The first day of the fair proved one of those delightful days which almost invariably characterize the last week of September in Berkshire. The streets and public square early took on that lively appearance which subsequent cattle-shows rendered so familiar. People from the neighboring regions, in all sorts of vehicles, began, almost with the rising of the sun, to pour into town, mixed with herds of cattle, sheep in wagons or flocks, a few swine, and some mechanical inventions.

The public square boasted but a single tree besides the Old Elm, and around the latter was an inclosure for the live stock. The remaining space and the neighboring streets were soon thronged with an excited and expectant crowd; many of them females, although the ladies did not honor the occasion with so numerous a representation as in later years. Booths for the sale of refreshments and Yankee notions had sprung up like mushrooms. The vendors had already learned their trade at general musters and the celebrations of the fourth of July; but neither of these holidays ever brought them so rich a harvest as they found in cattle-shows. The committee had announced that innocent amusements would be allowed, and enterprising geniuses provided them in abundance; especially the "fandango," or, as it was then called, the "aerial phaeton," which has never since failed to offer its dizzy pleasures to the youths and maidens who resort to cattle-shows. In this earlier time it often remained stationary for weeks in the open space adjoining Captain Pepoon's tavern on the south side of the park.

The proceedings and pageants of the day, under the direction of the society, were unique and imposing, and the whole occasion formed one of those gala days in which Pittsfield has always delighted. At eleven o'clock the members met at the town-house, where Mr. Watson delivered a brief but very interesting address. After apologizing for reading his remarks, as he was unaccustomed to extemporary speaking, he argued the value of agricultural soci-

eties from the good they had accomplished in many European countries. He dwelt particularly upon their effect in England, where the knowledge which they had collected and diffused, and the emulation which they had excited by the example of successful farmers, and by liberal prizes, had overcome the obstacles which nature herself seemed to interpose to successful agriculture in an island lying ten degrees north of our latitude. There was no country in Europe so generally, so well and so profitably, cultivated as England. To this, and to their numerous manufactories, he attributed the astonishing power which she had recently displayed in the Napoleonic wars; and, although, as a good democrat, he was bound to think that she seemed then sinking, comparatively, with a mill-stone around her neck, yet her energies and endless resources were the theme and the astonishment of mankind. Turning "from blood-stained, guilty Europe, to our more peaceful and more virtuous borders," and particularly to Berkshire county, he found himself in a latitude parallel to that of the most luxuriant countries of Europe, but far behind them, and at least a century behind England, in the profitable product of our soil. The natural vigor of our virgin soil, which had hitherto supplied in some measure the place of artificial manures, was now abated, as was remarkably evinced in the culture of winter wheat, which was once so congenial to our land, but which had in a manner disappeared.

The remedy for this declining agriculture he expected to find in this society whose duty, as a body and individually, was to collect and diffuse useful information, to make experiments, suggest improvements and excite a spirit of honorable competition.

Cattle-raising was then the primary object of the Berkshire farmer, and having a limited experience in that department, he quoted from Lawrence Sickel, president of the Pennsylvania Society: "Although the cattle of the northern states are the best in this country, and make as fine beef as the world can produce, yet there is much room for improvement. Even in England, notwithstanding their successful exertions for the last fifty years, good cattle are extremely scarce and command high prices. The present time is peculiarly favorable for a change in our stock. For the purpose of knowing what cattle of improved breeds are among us, and to give an opportunity for the more easy diffusion of valuable stock, the society have resolved to establish cattle-

shows in the vicinity of Philadelphia. This, and giving premiums are the most powerful means of improving cattle in the United States."

Mr. Watson commended this example as apposite to the aims of the Berkshire Society. He had introduced an improved breed of swine which he hoped, by the aid of the society's committees, to extend throughout the county. By a fortunate accident he had also been enabled to introduce a species of wheat lately brought from France, and a superior variety of potatoes, some of which would be delivered, during the winter, to the members of the society in each town of the county. He was cultivating madder—an important dye-stuff previously imported from Europe, although natural to our soil and climate, and easily cultivated. He would be able in the spring to supply a considerable number of sprouts for general cultivation. He called the attention of the society also to the importance of cultivating woad or pastel, a plant similar in its nature to indigo.

Of manufactures, he said :

In my view, there is every rational probability that this county is destined to become eventually, and probably in a much shorter period than is generally imagined, a respectable manufacturing county, in all those branches where the excessive dearness of labor can in some measure be obviated by the powerful application of machinery. And as no branch is so susceptible of this application as the manufacture of woollens, there can be little doubt, especially under the aspect of the times, but the future wealth and respectability of the county of Berkshire will be built on that substantial foundation. Owing to the fortunate introduction of a new and invaluable species of sheep, we shall, to all appearance, be abundantly supplied with a precious raw material to go hand in hand with the increase of our manufactories ; thus mutually propping and supporting each other.

Whether Mr. Watson looked with so true a prophecy to the future in other respects, will perhaps be questioned, although many will concede the wisdom of his foresight as exhibited in the following extract :

It is a lamentable truth, to which it has appeared heretofore impossible to apply a remedy, that the excessive use of ardent spirits, and the great increase of tippling-houses, has gained such a dangerous ascendancy over the less wealthy part of the community, arising principally from the want of habitual employment at certain seasons of the

year. Will not the extension of manufactories open a door for constant and regular employment to all classes and ages ; and thus gradually diminish the inducement to resort to such places—as the saying is—to kill time ? Will it not thus, by degrees, correct this unfortunate habit, so disgraceful to the character, and so injurious to the morals of that unfortunate portion of the community ? May we not also fondly hope that constant employment will tend to infuse into the rising generation more correct morals, habits of industry, and due subordination ?—Will it not also tend to check the spirit of emigration which holds our population nearly stationary ? As the means of subsistence are increased, will it not in the same proportion increase our population and lessen the inducement to enrich distant new regions—for the most part unhealthy to the first adventurers—thus depriving us of those energies to which we are naturally entitled ?

Mr. Watson closed his address, after stating several other encouraging circumstances, with the following paragraphs :

I have received a communication from Dudley A. Tyng, Esq., recording secretary to the respectable Massachusetts Agricultural Society, stating that they, highly approving our infant establishment, have already spontaneously voted for our acceptance a valuable collection of books on agriculture, which I shall deposit with our recording secretary for the benefit of our members.

The determination of our society to hold its exhibitions annually in this place will give them permanent stability and increasing respectability ; and it will be important to unite with our views, all that portion of the commonwealth lying west of the Connecticut river. The community will habitually look forward to enter the list of competitors in various objects ; besides, from the rapid increase of our society, there is no doubt but ample funds will be provided to give out in future with a liberal hand, prize-premiums, as a stimulus.

After this address, in which we must not forget to mention Mr. Watson declared that the society met “under the universal approbation of the community,” a procession was formed, at 12 o'clock, which impressed itself more deeply upon the memory and traditions of the towns-people than any other spectacle that the village streets have ever witnessed. Those who enjoyed it as children described it to their dying day with unequaled vividness and enthusiasm.

First in the pageant, came “The Pittsfield Band” whose music, according to the account of the day, was very inspiring and creditable. After them walked sixty yoke of prime oxen, connected

by chains, and drawing a plow held by Charles Goodrich, Esq. The leading driver of the oxen was Nathaniel Fairfield; Captain Goodrich and he being the two oldest farmers in the town; veterans also, it will be remembered, in the French and Indian wars, as well as in the politics and municipal affairs of the town, having been among the first settlers of Poontoosuck plantation in its initial year, 1752. After them, in natural order, followed the farmers of the county, carrying a flag "representing a sheaf of wheat on one side and a plough on the other."

Next, and suggestive of the new era opening in the industries of the town, came a broad platform, drawn by oxen, and bearing a large broadcloth loom, with a flying shuttle and a spinning jenny of forty spindles, all the machinery being in actual operation under skillful workmen. Among the latter was James Wrigley, a man of remarkably fine person, who was dressed in the old fashion then passing out of date, with small clothes, cocked hat, and shoes with silver buckles: his whole costume black, but decorated with an abundance of bright-colored ribbons or "favors." The appropriate following to this was composed of the mechanics of the county carrying a flag representing a saw on one side and a shuttle on the other.

Then came—perhaps in the nature of a triumphal car—a broad platform drawn by horses, and bearing various specimens of Berkshire manufactures; among them rolls of broadcloth, bolts of sail duck, handsome rose blankets, muskets, anchors, leather, etc.; with the flags of the United States and of the Commonwealth displayed above it.

The last division was formed by the officers and members of the Berkshire Agricultural Society, with heads of wheat, the badge of the organization, in their hats; the members having two heads tied with pack thread, the officers three fastened with a green ribbon. High sheriff, Col. Simon Larned, acted as marshal of the day, a post which has generally since been held on similar occasions by his successors in office. His assistants were Deputy Sheriff Theodore Hinsdale, and Messrs. Oramel Fanning, Jeremy Warriner and Elisha Ely. The whole five were mounted on white horses.

Mr. Watson, in his diary, commemorates this procession as "splendid, novel, and imposing beyond anything of the kind ever before exhibited in America." "It cost me," he says, "an infin-

ity of trouble and some cash, but it resulted in exciting a general attention in the northern states, and placing our society on elevated ground."

There appears, from the description, to have been nothing in the display very showy or gorgeous, even for a country-town, but it was sufficiently striking to please the common fancy, and, what was of more importance, it was full of pregnant meanings which impressed themselves with great force upon the popular mind, sharply pointing the facts and logic of Mr. Watson. From that day the society and its objects held a chief place in the hearts of the people of Berkshire. At its meeting on the first day of the fair, the society appointed as a committee to award premiums on the stock exhibited: Major Erastus Rowley, Major Samuel Buffington, Joseph Shearer, Esq., Wolcott Hubbel, Esq., Col. Levi Belding, Dr. Thaddeus Pomeroy, and Capt. Daniel Brown, who, the next day, made the following report: That Erastus Sackett of Pittsfield exhibited the best bull; that Capt. Nathaniel Fairfield of Pittsfield, exhibited the best yoke of oxen, but he not being a member of the society, could not receive the premium, and it was given to David Ashley, Jr., of Pittsfield, who made the next best exhibition of oxen. That Roswell Root of Pittsfield showed the best four-year-old steers, David Campbell of Pittsfield the best three-year-old, Henry Chamberlin of Dalton the best two-year-old. That Benjamin Brown of Cheshire exhibited the best cow; Roswell Root of Pittsfield and Henry Chamberlin of Dalton, the best swine; Jonathan Allen of Pittsfield the best full-blood merino lamb; Arthur Scholfield of Pittsfield the best seven-eighths blood merino lamb; Samuel L. Allen of Pittsfield the best twenty common ewes. And the premiums were delivered accordingly.

This first cattle-show under the direction of the Berkshire Agricultural Society more than satisfied the most brilliant anticipations of its projectors. The *Sun's* report says: "The concourse of citizens was more numerous than has probably ever convened in Pittsfield and, what is of more importance to the real objects of the society, the number of valuable and prime objects brought forward for premiums and exhibition, was undoubtedly greater than was ever before collected in this section of country."

Congratulations poured in from every quarter, and these, with the approbation expressed by leading journals and distinguished

patriots in all parts of the country, inspired the leaders of the institution with new courage and vigor. They were, to be sure, still embarrassed, as they continued to be for many years, by the lack of pecuniary means with which to carry out their liberal desires; but they were conscious that the foundation which they had laid, good as it was, would, unless promptly built upon, soon go to ruin, as others had before it. They therefore applied themselves zealously to preparations for the cattle-show of 1812.

Before it came, the country was involved in the war which Mr. Watson had prophesied in 1808. How intimately that event was connected with the interests of agriculture in Berkshire, will appear from the account which we give, in another chapter, of the Cantonment. The second cattle-show took place on the sixth and seventh of October, 1812; or about three months after the declaration of the war. The newspapers, occupied with political wrangling and war news, gave less of their aid than in the previous year; but the managers were indefatigable, and enjoyed the prestige of past success, and also the encouragement of the commandant and other officers of the Cantonment. Premiums to the amount of two hundred and eight dollars, were offered; including one of fifty dollars for the best piece of superfine broad-cloth, six quarters wide, not less than twenty yards in length, to be manufactured in either of the counties of Berkshire or Hampshire.¹

Competition for the premiums in the department of domestic animals, was invited from all parts of the Union. The Fair was again favored with delightful weather, and the town was thronged as in the previous fall. The procession was of a somewhat less marked character; the plow, with its venerable holders and its long string of cattle being missed, while instead of the loom and other machinery in operation, there were borne simply the broad-cloths which had been entered for premium. But escort was furnished by a detachment of United States troops from the Cantonment, and the popular interest in these gallant defenders of their country, who were about to march for the northern frontiers, found in them abundant sources of enthusiasm.

Bitter as were the partisan feuds of the day, both political parties took a hearty and harmonious part in the anniversary. An

¹ "Old Hampshire," which was, in 1812, divided into the counties of Hampshire, Hampden and Franklin.

address was delivered in the First Parish (democratic) Church, by Thomas Gold, a prominent federalist. There was a dinner at the democratic hotel; and the day's festivities closed with a brilliant illumination, and a ball at Captain Merrick's federal inn; the latter, the first of a joyous series which for many years gave a crowning zest to the cattle-show and fair.

On the second day, the society met in the Union (federal) Church, where the premium broadcloths were suspended before the pulpit. President Watson—a democrat—made a brief address, and delivered the premiums to the successful competitors, each of whom also received a diploma. The fifty-dollar premium for broadcloth had been awarded to Mr. Watson, himself; but he divided it between James Wrigley, the English weaver, and Andrew Murphy, the dresser and finisher, who was an Irishman.

Encouraged by this continued success, the society, at its meeting in connection with the show of 1812, determined upon a new advance, and one which contributed much to the interest of succeeding exhibitions. "It was considered," says Mr. Watson, "of the first importance to enlist the sympathies and arouse the interest of the females of the county in the operations of the society." Not, we apprehend, that they had shown any lack of appreciation of the pageantries of the procession, or the exercises in the church—and certainly not in the ball. But, as yet, the articles of feminine workmanship upon which premiums were offered, were confined exclusively to a few products of the loom, for which they competed in common with those of the other sex. To say nothing of the innumerable nick-nacks, works of art, taste, elegance and usefulness which have since filled the exhibition-halls; then not even butter and cheese, hosiery or linen cloth, were included in the premium-list.

The backwardness of the ladies in competing for such prizes as were within their reach was, however, attributed by Mr. Watson to their native shrinking from publicity; and he devised a plan to overcome this obstacle. In January, 1812, the society had held a show of cloths, when four premiums, to the value of thirty dollars, were awarded, two of them to ladies: Mrs. Experience Luce and Mrs. R. S. Chapell. It was now determined to hold a similar show in January, 1813, offering sixty dollars in premiums, and two of the society's silver medals: the competi-

tors to be exclusively women, who must receive their prizes in person. We will allow Mr. Watson to tell the remainder of the story in his own words :

The day arrived : a large room (Washington Hall, in Captain Merrick's inn) was prepared. Many superior articles were exhibited, especially woollens and linens ; but no female appeared to claim the premiums. This was the crisis, and I was extremely agitated lest the experiment should fail. Native timidity and the fear of ridicule restrained them. No one dared be the first to support a new project. To counteract this feeling, we resorted to an expedient which, in an hour, accomplished our wishes. I left the hall, and with no small difficulty, prevailed upon my good wife¹ to accompany me to the house of exhibition. I then dispatched messengers to the other ladies of the village announcing that she waited for them at the cloth-show. They hastened out. The farmers' wives and daughters, who were secretly watching the movements of the waters, also sallied forth, and the hall was speedily filled with female spectators and candidates. I immediately arose in the rear of the table, on which the glittering premiums were displayed, and delivered a formal address.

At an adjourned meeting in November, 1812, the work of the society was divided into four departments : of agriculture, under the management of Thomas Gold, Ezekiel Bacon and Samuel D. Colt ; of manufactures, under the management of Thomas Melville, Arthur Scholfield, and John B. Root ; of domestic animals, under the management of Joseph Shearer, Oren Goodrich and David Campbell ; of general administration, directed by the president of the society, and the chairmen of the three other departments.

The cattle-show of 1813, although it continued but one day and the procession was omitted, marked a great advance in the character of the festival. The premiums at the ladies' cloth-show in January, just described, were given in silver-plate and the silver-medals of the society, and at this cattle-show, the practice of giving premiums in these articles became general. On woolen cloth, of household-manufacture, the first premium was a silver-bowl (with engravings) valued at twenty-five dollars ; the second, a similar bowl worth fifteen dollars ; the third, a cup worth twelve ; the fourth, a set of tea-spoons worth ten dollars ; the fifth, the society's silver-medal worth five dollars. Premiums

¹Who, it seems, shared the native timidity of the rustic females.

of a similar character from sixteen to five dollars in value were offered for carpeting, flannels, blankets, stockings, linen, flax, leather, clothier's work, madder, woad, and domestic animals. At this time, it will be observed, and at all the earlier shows, the premiums were of much greater cost than were offered for similar articles at the later fairs; rarely being less than four dollars. In the early part of the year it was arranged that the January cloth-shows should be devoted exclusively to the display of ladies' work; but so effectually had Mr. Watson's ingenious device done away with the obstacle of female timidity, that it was found practicable to consolidate this exhibition with the October cattle-show and fair. "The ladies of Berkshire" were, however, "notified that the assembly-room¹ over the Female Academy would be appropriated exclusively to the display of their industry and ingenuity in exhibiting such articles as they might be disposed to offer in person, for premiums or inspection; in particular, woollens, shirting-linens, blankets, carpeting, stockings, chip-hats, plaids, bombazets, and rugs." They were further informed that the passage leading to the hall would be kept open, and the whole house devoted to their use, and that suitable refreshments would be there provided for them.

Superfine broadcloths from any part of the United States were to be delivered to James Buel on the 11th of October, by noon, and were to be removed on the next day to the assembly-room, in Morgan's coffee-house on Bank row, for exhibition. All animals were excluded from the public square except those offered for premium; and these were to be placed in pens under the direction of Joseph Shearer. Animals, for exhibition only, were placed in North and South streets.

These arrangements were fully carried out, and in the cattle-show of 1813, we find most of the characteristic features which distinguished those of later years. The invitation to the ladies, in particular, was answered by a very creditable display of household-manufactures, mostly cloths; although very far short of that marvelous variety of useful and ornamental products which has since rendered this department so attractive to the spectators, so interesting to the competitors and so honorable to their taste, ingenuity and skill. Only so much of the diffidence complained

¹ "Assembly-room" was the name by which it was then the fashion to call any public hall used for dancing.

of by Mr. Watson, remained to the ladies, as served to make them more interesting. A Virginian letter-writer, in 1822, thus describes the scene as premiums were awarded to them :

The president, from the pulpit, immediately after the address, announced : " As premiums are proclaimed for females, they will please arise in their places, and the head marshal will deliver to each her premium and certificate of honorable testimony." The instant the name of the successful candidate was announced, the eyes of an exhilarated audience were flying in every direction, impelled by the strongest curiosity to see the fortunate, blushing female, with downcast eyes, raising both her hands, as the marshal approached ; with one to receive her premium, with the other her certificate. The effect cannot be described. It must be seen to be realized."

At the show of 1813, the premiums awarded the Pittsfield ladies were as follows : To Misses Ann Maria Chapell and Sarah Spring, silver-bowls, and to Mrs. Betsey Ball, a silver-cup ; all for woolen cloth. To Mrs. Keturah Brown, a silver-cup, and to Mrs. R. Watson, a silver-medal, for carpeting. To Mrs. Abigail Backus, a silver-cup, and to Mrs. J. D. Colt, a silver-medal, for flannel. To Miss Jerusha Chapell, for the best blanket, a set of tea-spoons. To Miss Almira Weller, a medal for a pair of stockings. To Mrs. Laura Derbyshire, a medal for chip-hats. To Mrs. Clarinda Luce, a medal for woolen-plaid, and another for bombazete. There were eighteen premiums awarded to women, of which thirteen were taken in Pittsfield. Twenty-five were awarded to men ; of which fifteen were taken in Pittsfield, as follows : By Elkanah Watson and Daniel Stearns, on the largest quantity and best quality of madder ; by Jonas Ball and Jonathan Allen, 2d, upon woad, or pastel ; by Joel Stevens, on bulls ; by Richard Campbell, and Jonathan Yale Clark, on grass-fed oxen ; by Erastus Sackett, on four-year-old steers ; by Joseph Shearer, on two-year-old heifers ; by Richard Campbell, on working-oxen ; by Ichabod Chapman, on swine ; by Jonathan Allen, 1st, on full-blooded merino ram lambs ; by Joseph Merrick, on full-blooded merino ewe lambs ; by James and Simeon Brown, on calf-skin leather ; by Jonathan N. Chapell, on the best finished household-cloth ; by Oramel Fanning, on merino-wool hats.

As we have said, the cattle-shows and fairs of the Berkshire Agricultural Society, moulding themselves into more perfect form, year by year, had in 1813, assumed most of the distinctive feat-

ures which afterwards continued to characterize them. The most marked exception was the plowing-match. Competitive contests of this kind were held at Hartford and elsewhere previous to the organization of the Berkshire Society in 1811; but they did not become part of the Pittsfield show until 1818, when premiums of ten and five dollars were offered. Four teams, each of one yoke of oxen, were entered: The competitors being Levi Beebe, Thomas Melville and Charles Goodrich of Pittsfield, and ——— Curtis of Stockbridge. Mr. Beebe plowed a quarter of an acre of green sward in thirty-five minutes; Mr. Melville's plowman—name not given—in thirty-nine minutes; Mr. Curtis in thirty-seven minutes; Mr. Goodrich in forty-two minutes. Other considerations than time governing the decision, Mr. Melville received the first premium and Mr. Curtis the second.

The superiority of Mr. Melville's work was attributed very much to the excellence of his plow, which was represented "to cost but little more than those in ordinary use, and to be of so much better model, that the farmer making the change would be the gainer in a single year." The aid which it gave in introducing improved agricultural implements, in place of the clumsy tools of earlier times, was one of the chief advantages of the cattle-shows.

Still earlier than the plowing-match, in 1814, upon the suggestion of Ebenezer Center, a prominent member of the executive committee, another "interesting and novel feature in the practical operation of the society was adopted. A committee of prominent farmers was selected and the duty devolved upon them of traversing the county in the month of July, when the fields are in full luxuriance, and examining and awarding premiums upon the standing-crops offered for competition."¹

This committee soon became the most important of all, and the reading of its reports was among the most valuable, although the least showy, features of the cattle-show. A southern gentleman, in a letter widely-published at the time, says the most interesting of all the proceedings were the reports of the committees, especially the detailed reports of the visiting-committees. And, from that time down, these reports of the committee on agriculture, since divided into that upon summer, and that upon fall, crops

¹Watson's Memoirs.

have been prepared with more labor and research than any others, and have been often distinguished for their array of valuable facts and sound thought.

The Berkshire Agricultural Society thus took form as an institution, by degrees, and the general characteristics which we have sketched show, as others of minor importance would, how unlike it soon became to the organizations in New York, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere, which it at first proposed to itself for models. Indeed, the parts of teacher and pupil were reversed, and in 1822, Thomas Gold, the third president of the association, was able to write of it: "Its fame and influence have extended over the entire surface of the United States; its example followed, its approbation courted, by its extended offspring. It has been recognized, as well in Europe as in America, as an original, novel plan, and the most excellent organization ever conceived to promote the great interests under its patronage."

Nor had the society confined itself to the advancement of agriculture by the premiums and other incitements of its cattle-shows and fairs. Like the older organizations, it had been zealous to disseminate information in books, pamphlets, and newspapers, to introduce new products and new varieties of the old, and to improve the breeds of cattle and other live stock by importations and otherwise. Of course, some of the new products were introduced as experiments, and occasionally proved unsuccessful. Thus woad, which it was hoped would prove a substitute for indigo, was planted under the auspices of the society, which published elaborate directions for its cultivation; but, although considerable quantities were raised, it proved valuable only as a ferment for the more costly dye, and was given up by the farmers. So with madder, which was found not to be a profitable crop.

Still, most of the action of the society proved of practical value, and Major Melville in his address as president, even as early as 1816, could thus congratulate his associates:

Only six years ago, the agricultural concerns of this county were stationary. Few, if any, valuable improvements were attempted. Indifference and unconcern seemed to pervade society. In 1810, the genius of the county shook off the slumbers of its husbandry, and the spirit of improvement commenced. Under the auspices of your association, a career of usefulness was resumed and diligently promoted. The former state of things has given way to a new condition; unfold-

ing to us improvements, in variety and usefulness surpassing the most sanguine expectations. Every department of rural employment demonstrates an intelligent cultivation, and effectual good management. In the selection and rearing of domestic animals, more correct information prevails, and greater emulation is awakened. The vast increase in variety and excellence of our crops satisfy our warmest desires, and leave us nothing to envy in the most favored regions of the west.

There is, perhaps, something of the rostrum's rose-color in this picture; but, addressed to those familiar with the facts, it could not have been very violently overtinted, and it at least indicates very marked and beneficial effects of the society's operations.

But these effects were more conspicuous in Pittsfield and its immediate vicinity than in other parts of the county, although throughout its whole extent, its good influence had been largely felt. And even in the most favored spots very much remained to be accomplished. In this work we cannot minutely follow the society, nor in its efforts to extend its operations. We return to its early difficulties and the methods by which they were overcome.

And, chief among these difficulties, was the lack of pecuniary means. From 1811 to 1816, the society depended entirely upon its small fee for membership, and upon the voluntary gifts of individuals, which amounted in that interval to over thirty-six hundred dollars, mostly in subscriptions of from five to twenty-five dollars; the larger sums being almost invariably given by citizens of Pittsfield, or obtained by them from friends outside the county. In 1812, Mr. Watson spent a good deal of time, and a hundred and fifty dollars in money, in an abortive attempt to obtain legislative aid for the society, and continued his efforts in the same direction, and with like result, as long as he remained in office. He was much vexed by his ill-success; but his successors in office, with perhaps a more intimate knowledge of the ways of legislators, persevered in their application, and in 1816 obtained a grant of two hundred dollars yearly for three years. In 1818, through the exertions of the Berkshire Society primarily, a general law was passed, providing that every agricultural association in the state, whose field of operations embraced at least one county, and which possessed a securely invested fund of one thousand dollars obtained from private sources, should receive two hundred dollars annually from the treasury of the Commonwealth; and in the same proportion for

additional investments. From this time the society was comparatively free from pecuniary embarrassment, although its means were far from adequate to secure all the objects which it desired.

Its course was, however, beset with vexations of a still more irritating character, arising from the jealousy which sprang up against it — especially in the southern towns of the county — as designed for the aggrandizement of Pittsfield, and as manifesting partiality to its citizens in the distribution of offices and premiums. The short-lived apathy which annoyed Mr. Watson, was of little moment; and the labors of organizing the society and developing its system of operations must have been rather an agreeable mental task. Perplexity concerning the means of defraying current expenses was certainly not so pleasant; but, to men conscious of only the most liberal and patriotic motives, it was not so trying, by far, to the temper, as it was to meet the cavilings of those who could not, or would not, rise above the influence of petty village-rivalries.

No sooner did it become manifest, that, while the society was to become an honor and a source of great benefits to the entire county, it would redound especially to the credit and advantage of the town whose citizens had originated it, than appeals to local feeling began to be made, greatly checking its progress and weakening its power for good. It was one of the many instances in which the sedulously cultivated jealousy of Pittsfield reflected serious injury upon the whole county.

This jealousy found vent in efforts to exclude citizens of Pittsfield from the management of the society, and to hold the cattle-show and fair yearly in different towns. It had been a leading principle with Mr. Watson, derived from European example, that the fairs should be stationary in one town; and universal experience has since proved its wisdom. To violate it, would have been to sap the well-laid foundations of the institution; and its leading members in Pittsfield successfully resisted the attempt.

These efforts to disturb the original plan culminated, in 1825, in newspaper-discussions which elucidated how large was the share which Pittsfield had in founding and building up the society. The amount of its contributions prior to the legislative act of 1816 has been indicated. In order to obtain the benefit of this act, the members of the society gave to the treasurer their notes for fifty dollars each, with interest annually; which, as they

were all responsible men, was considered such an investment as the law required. In 1825, the society numbered two hundred and three active members, and the fund obtained and invested, as above described, amounted to two thousand four hundred and seventy-five dollars, of which citizens of Pittsfield contributed eighteen hundred dollars. This fund was established in 1819. Previous to that date, the whole amount contributed to the society by individuals was about forty-two hundred dollars, of which the people of Pittsfield gave three thousand and ninety-eight dollars, the remainder of the county eleven hundred and twenty-two dollars. The contributions of the town, in time, influence, and personal effort, were even in much greater proportion. The labors of the president, secretaries, and other officers there resident, were, alone, of value almost beyond computation. The publication of these statistics sufficed to show that the benefits derived by Pittsfield from the location of the cattle-show and fair were not out of just proportion to the support which it had given the society; and, since it was moreover for the best interest of all that the show should not be migratory, all motions to hold them in other towns were uniformly voted down. Every effort was, however, made, to conciliate the friendship of all parts of the county. The leading offices were conferred upon citizens of Lenox and Stockbridge; great care was taken that other towns than Pittsfield should be liberally represented on the committees, and accommodations were provided for the stock brought from a distance to the shows. Local clubs were proposed as a substitute for holding the cattle-shows in different towns, it being suggested that only cattle and other articles which had received premiums at local shows should be entered at those of the county. A local society was actually established at Stockbridge. But perfect satisfaction, it was found, could only be obtained by the division of the large territory of the county into districts, each having its own society.

Vexatious as this controversy was, it proved finally beneficial to the society, and the cattle-shows and fairs rapidly increased in the character and amount of their exhibitions. Something of the splendors of the earlier processions was revived, and the escort of the Berkshire Greys and the music of excellent bands enlivened the display; while the exercises in the church were generally in the highest degree creditable. It was at this time, too, that the

proposition was first made, although not carried out for more than a quarter of a century, to purchase grounds for the society's exhibitions.¹

We cannot here fully enter into all the interesting and curious details of this early history of the Berkshire Agricultural Society; but a few detached incidents must not be omitted. After the first year or two, the semi-annual meetings at Lenox appear to have been discontinued. In 1812, a board of trustees were appointed to whom a great part of the business of the society was for a time intrusted.

In 1814, Mr. Watson declined re-election as president of the society, and was succeeded by Major Thomas Melville, who manifested a spirit very similar to that of his predecessor.²

In 1816, he returned to his former residence in Albany; "abandoning," he says, "all those rural scenes which had delighted me—all my flocks and herds, which I had reared with infinite pains for nearly nine years. In the midst of promoting agricultural improvements and domestic industry, I returned to resume the dull and monotonous scenes of a city-life."

The society instructed its president to convey to him its sentiments of regret for his removal, and its "high sense of the important services he had rendered, by his patriotic efforts to promote agriculture and manufactures, and by his perseverance in the establishment of this interesting institution." And it farther voted "to perpetuate its gratitude to its founder by offering annually, as a premium for the best full-blooded merino buck, a silver-cup of the value of \$12.00, with the words 'Watson cup' inscribed thereon." Mr. Watson attended the twenty-seventh anniversary of the society in October, 1837, where he received the most gratifying public and private exhibitions of respect and kind recollections, and delivered his last address; his valedictory to all such associations; "and here," says his biographer, "appropriately terminated his public course." He died at Port Kent, New York, December 5, 1842, in the eighty-fifth year of his age. The

¹ By a resolution offered in 1822, by Thomas A. Gold, Esq.

² When Mr. Watson removed from Pittsfield, in 1816, Major Melville purchased and occupied his residence and farm, where he continued until late in life, exhibiting his interest in agricultural affairs in various ways, and among others by establishing in 1822, "a repository for the sale of agricultural implements"—the first in the county.

inscription upon the plain and simple obelisk which marks his grave, indicates the feeling which he retained to the last, concerning his work in Pittsfield:

Here lie the remains of

ELKANAH WATSON,

The founder and first president of the Berkshire Agricultural Society.
May generations yet unborn learn by his example to love their country.

The annual festivals of the Agricultural Society continued to be the great gala-days of the year for the town and the county, and many pleasing incidents regarding them might be related; but no very striking changes in their management took place until their removal to grounds purchased by the society in 1855, which introduced a new period in their history, whose consideration must be reserved for another chapter. We take leave of its earlier era by quoting the ode written for the cattle-show of 1820, by William Cullen Bryant, who was at that time a young lawyer of Great Barrington, and an active politician, serving often as secretary of the federal conventions.

Since last our vales these rites admir'd,
Another year has come and flown,
But where her rosy steps retir'd,
Has left her gifts profusely strown.

No killing frost on germ and flower,
To blast the hopes of spring, was nigh;
No wrath condens'd the ceaseless shower,
Or seal'd the fountains of the sky.

But kindly suns and gentle rains,
And liberal dews and airs of health,
Rear'd the large harvests of the plains,
And nurs'd the meadow's fragrant wealth.

As if the indulgent power who laid,
On man the great command to toil,
Well-pleased to see that law obey'd,
Had touch'd, in love, the teeming soil.

And here, while autumn wanders pale
Beneath the fading forest shade,
Gather'd from many a height and vale,
The bounties of the year are laid.

Here toil, whom oft the setting sun
Has seen at his protracted task,
Demands the palm his patience won,
And art has come his wreaths to ask.

Well may the hymn of victory flow,
And mingle with the voice of mirth,
While here are spread the spoils that show
Our triumphs o'er reluctant earth.



CHAPTER XVI.

MEDICAL COLLEGE AND MEDICAL SOCIETIES.

[1784-1875.]

Preliminary action—Dr. O. S. Root—Application for charter—Nature of the opposition to it—Charter granted—Lecture-course before the charter—First faculty and trustees—Purchase of Pittsfield hotel-building—Subscriptions and endowment—Town action and grant—Popular dread of resurrectionists—Exciting cases of “body-snatching”—Anecdote of Timothy Hall—Provisions for anatomical study at the medical college—Doctor Goodhue elected president—Sketch of his life—Lyceum of natural history—Sketch of Prof. Chester Dewey—Death of Doctor Goodhue—Dr. Zadock Howe elected president—Dr. H. H. Childs made president—Connection with Williams College dissolved—Equality of the two medical colleges of Massachusetts recognized by the State Medical Society—Death of Professor Palmer—College-building burned—Relief by grant from the legislature and citizens’ subscriptions—New college erected on South street—Dr. H. H. Childs resigns his professorship—Decline of the college—Clinique established—Doctor Timothy Childs—Efforts to restore the prosperity of the college—*Berkshire Medical Journal*—The institution dissolved and the building sold—Lyceums and alumni—History of Berkshire medical societies—Condition of the profession in 1785 and in 1875 contrasted—Pittsfield Medical Society established—Vaccination introduced into Berkshire.

THE year 1822 is marked in the annals of Pittsfield by the practical establishment of the Berkshire Medical Institution, which for many years contributed much to the town’s material prosperity, and still more to its intellectual culture. At this date there were already, in New England, seven medical schools, of high repute. Nevertheless, there had long been a desire for a similar institution in western Massachusetts. The first effectual effort in that direction was not made until 1821, when Oliver S. Root¹ returning from a course of lectures at Castleton, Vt., Dr.

¹ Oliver Sacket Root was born at Pittsfield, July 1, 1799, and passed his youth in the family of his grandfather, Col. Oliver Root. In 1821, he com-

J. P. Batchelder, a professor in that institution, having become dissatisfied with it, sent word by him to Dr. H. H. Childs that the favorable moment had arrived to establish a new school at Pittsfield. Doctor Childs seized the hint with avidity, and immediately took steps to avail himself of it. Public-spirited, devoted to his profession, and eager for distinction in it, this movement was one to enlist his warmest sympathies. Prompt, practical, and energetic, he pushed it vigorously and without pause; never, for a moment, suffering the public interest in it to flag.

He first pressed his plans upon the newly organized Berkshire District Medical Society, which appointed Drs. Asa Burbank, of Lanesboro, and Daniel Collins of Lenox, together with himself, a committee, to petition the legislature for a charter and endowment for a medical college at Pittsfield. This petition was presented at the June session of 1822. It was worded with great shrewdness and tact, and placed in a clear and strong light, both the argument for the proposed measure, and the answers to anticipated objections. After demonstrating concisely and forcibly the absolute necessity of public institutions for medical instruction, it presented a cogent argument in favor of the new one. It called the attention of the legislature to the fact that a large proportion of the students in the medical colleges of the neighboring states were citizens of Massachusetts, and concluded as follows:

Your petitioners forbear any comment upon a fact which will become disgraceful, should it be permitted to exist after being brought to the notice of the Legislature. Lest this statement should be thought to affect the high reputation which is so justly due to the distinguished professors in the institution at Cambridge, your petitioners beg leave to state, that an explanation of the fact is to be found in the enormous expense of attendance on a course of lectures at that institution, which amounts to an utter denial of all its advantages to students of mod-

menced the study of medicine at Castleton, Vt.; but, after his first course of lectures, he spent a year in Virginia, as a teacher. On his return he resumed his studies at the Berkshire Medical Institution and graduated in 1824. He immediately entered upon the practice of medicine in his native town, and continued in its active duties almost to the day of his death, October 22, 1870. For many years in the latter part of his life, Doctor Root was secretary of the trustees of the medical college, secretary, treasurer and actuary of the cemetery corporation, and an active member of the town school-committee. In the latter position he was especially distinguished, and the children of the public schools attended his funeral in a body.

erate pecuniary means. With this view of the subject your petitioners anticipate that the only question on which your honorable body will deliberate is with respect to the location of the institution. And on this subject it is not, perhaps, presuming too far to expect that the Legislature will concur with the medical society of the county of Berkshire in selecting the town of *Pittsfield*, as offering the most eligible situation. This town is about equally distant from the several medical institutions in the adjoining states, and would afford the necessary accommodations for students on terms as moderate as could be offered in any part of the Commonwealth.

The county of Berkshire has cheerfully paid its due proportion to the treasury of the Commonwealth, and its citizens have rejoiced in the munificent patronage which literature and science have received at the hands of the Legislature ; and they confidently trust they shall not be disappointed, when in their turn they ask that pecuniary assistance, which they have enabled the Legislature so liberally to extend to other institutions. Justice to the inhabitants of the town of Pittsfield compels your petitioners to observe, that in anticipation of an incorporation and endowment by the Legislature, they have subscribed the amount of three thousand dollars, including the grant from the town to be paid to the trustees of a medical institution to be located in that town. Your petitioners therefore pray an act of incorporation for a medical institution to be established in the town of Pittsfield, county of Berkshire, and a grant for the benefit of said institution.

This petition was referred to the Fall session and ordered to be printed in the *Boston Centinel* and *Pittsfield Sun*. When it came up for consideration, it met with no little opposition from the friends of the school connected with Harvard University, and from other gentlemen in the eastern part of the state, who as yet were too little willing to admit the intellectual equality of the professional men of the two sections, and who also dreaded innovation from the teachings of a younger seminary.

The location proposed, and the most active leader in the new enterprise, did not tend to reassure them. The radicalism of Berkshire, and especially of Pittsfield, was proverbial at Boston ; and Doctor Childs was known to be ardently attached to the most ultra school of democratic politicians. Only two years previous to the petition, this feeling had been revived by the doctor's course in the constitutional convention.

It is not strange that many of the eastern conservatives were reluctant to trust the education of youth, even in medicine, to so

dangerous hands; and to place them in a locality where they would be surrounded by so very progressive influences.

The petition was, however, ably and zealously supported in the senate by Hon. Jonathan Allen, and in the house by Hon. William C. Jarvis. Doctor Childs was also at Boston, urging the claims of western Massachusetts with his usual ardor. The charter was finally granted and was signed by Governor Brooks, January 4, 1823; but the people of Berkshire were generously permitted to endow their own college.

This charter authorized the establishment of a medical school at Pittsfield under the title of the Berkshire Medical Institution; and named as trustees, Rev. Heman Humphrey, Dr. J. P. Batchelder, Henry Hubbard, Samuel M. McKay, and Henry H. Childs, together with such others as they might associate with themselves; the number in all, to be not less than seven nor more than fifteen.

This board was authorized to hold real estate of the value of \$50,000, and the same amount in personal property. The usual governing and managing powers were granted, but it was provided that degrees should be conferred only by the president and trustees of Williams College, and under the same rules and restrictions which were adopted and recognized in bestowing similar degrees by "the University at Cambridge."

This plan was adopted to assimilate the practice here to that of the Massachusetts Medical College whose head is the president of the University; and with the further view to secure conservatism and uniform practice throughout the commonwealth, to avoid the multiplication of bodies with the power to confer scholastic degrees, and to give greater dignity to, and confidence in, the Berkshire diplomas. The trustees, in their first circular, stated that it was adopted "by agreement" (probably with the trustees of Williams) "sanctioned by the commonwealth;" but it doubtless went far to allay the fears of those who had honestly opposed the charter. It, however, proved inconvenient in practice, and soon came to be unnecessary for the purposes named.

Without waiting the result of their application to the legislature, the friends of the college, on the 16th of August, chose a "board of management" to superintend its affairs. And this board, which consisted of the same gentlemen named in the charter as trustees, announced in the *Sun* of August 22d, a course of

lectures to commence on the 18th of September, with the following professors: Theory and practice of medicine, Dr. H. H. Childs; anatomy, surgery, and physiology, Dr. J. P. Batchelder; materia medica, Dr. Asa Burbank; chemistry, botany and mineralogy, Prof. Chester Dewey of Williams College. Obstetrics, by a lecturer not named.

The tuition for the course was fixed at forty dollars; and board at one dollar and seventy-five cents per week, including washing, room-rent, and lodging in the institution.

In 1821, the Pittsfield (democratic) Hotel had become unprofitable, and the pacification of parties rendered it no longer necessary. It was therefore determined to sell it, and Joseph Shearer, Eldad Francis, and Doctor Childs were appointed a committee for that purpose. Of the original three hundred shares into which the property was divided, Joseph Shearer, a strong friend of the proposed college, owned at this time one hundred and sixty-two, and Doctor Childs thirty-nine; and it was, perhaps, in anticipation of that enterprise that a deed of the premises, for the sum of three thousand dollars, was made to the latter gentleman, on the 28th of January, 1822; although this was three months before the vote of the medical society to petition for the charter.

The purchase included the large three-story building described in the account of the hotel, the grounds on which it stood, and the furniture. The furniture was somewhat worn, and the building needed repairs, as well as a few changes to adapt it to its new uses; but little was done in that direction until after the charter. With the aid of the stable for anatomical purposes, very fair provision was, however, afforded for the informal course of 1822.

The embryo college was organized at the time specified; going into operation with twenty-five students, almost before a large portion of the neighboring people knew that it was contemplated. The result of this preliminary course was most beneficial; attracting, by the favorable reports of the students, the attention of the public not only in western Massachusetts, but in the adjoining states; while it greatly facilitated the subsequent labor of organizing the institution.

The first meeting of the trustees was held January 31, 1823, when Henry C. Brown and Joseph Shearer, were added to the board. Jonathan Allen and William C. Jarvis of Pittsfield, Levi Lincoln of Worcester, Daniel Noble of Williamstown, Henry

Shaw of Lanesboro, became members during the same year. Rev. Mr. Humphrey resigned in May. Upon the remaining members, during the earlier years of the school, there devolved a vast amount of labor and anxiety.

The trustees commenced their work with a fund of barely three thousand dollars, mostly in unpaid subscriptions. Measures were immediately taken for the collection of these subscriptions; and in May, 1823, Doctor Childs received fifteen hundred dollars, and gave a mortgage-deed of the "Institution." In May, 1826, the trustees paid sixteen hundred and fourteen dollars more, and came into full possession of the estate.

In the meantime, the town had shown an interest, although, it must be confessed a not exceedingly liberal one, in the institution. In May, 1822, General Nathan Willis, chairman of a committee appointed to consider the petition of Dr. H. H. Childs "for a site on which to locate a medical chapel,"¹ reported that they were "highly impressed with the importance of establishing liberal institutions for the diffusion of science and useful knowledge, and particularly such as will tend to the suppression of quackery." But they relied upon "a minute and able exposition in writing by Doctor Childs, of the benefits which might accrue, from the proposed establishment, to the cause of medical science, and to the pecuniary advantages of the town;" and they recommended the following resolution:

Resolved, that we highly approve the establishment of a medical college in the town of Pittsfield, and that we feel disposed to render it every facility consistent with the interest and duty of the town.

The committee, however, hinted that the resources of the town were limited, and the claims on its liberality numerous. The meeting adopted the resolution; instructed the selectmen to join in the petition for the college-charter; and granted the trustees the privilege of erecting a fire-proof building, thirty feet by forty in area, on the town-land east of the town-house, and as near it as the selectmen might deem safe.

In March, 1823, more ambitious projects were entertained, and a committee of fifteen citizens of note was appointed to consider a resolution offered by Doctor Childs, "to erect an elegant and commodious building for the Medical College." We hear no more

¹ *Sic* in records.

of this committee, but in July, 1824, in response to a somewhat humbler request, the town permitted the trustees, in lieu of erecting the fire-proof structure required by the vote of 1822, to remove the old hotel-stable to the lot east of the town-house, and remodel it for the purposes of the college, on condition that the town-house was kept constantly insured against fire communicated from the new building.

The stable was removed and converted into a neat building containing cabinet, and anatomical rooms and apartments for other purposes. Some other out-buildings were erected and improvements were made in the old hotel-building to fit it for a "commons house;"¹ the entire expense being thirty-three hundred dollars.

The college had now buildings which compared favorably with those of similar institutions; but the trustees still experienced extreme perplexity in providing for the necessary outlay, and in meeting the current expenses of the school. In 1823, Doctor Childs and Hon. Henry Hubbard were appointed a committee to petition the legislature for an endowment; and they succeeded in obtaining a grant of five thousand dollars, payable in five annual installments. But this was soon absorbed by the imperative demands of the new enterprise, and no further assistance was obtained from the commonwealth, although often asked, until an especial emergency arose in 1850.

For twenty-six years the Institution lived and flourished upon a fund—including the legislative grant and all paid subscriptions—of certainly not more than ten thousand dollars, all of it invested in the college-buildings, furniture and apparatus. During that time it seems never to have been out of debt. Until the last installment of the grant was paid, the amount to be received was anticipated by loans; when that payment was made, debt had become chronic. In 1835, the outstanding claims were reported at four thousand and thirty-eight dollars, most of them dating back to 1825. The legislature refused the aid which was asked from it, and, so far as the record shows, no further effort to free the Institution from debt was made, until 1843, when the number of students having become large, it was voted to appropriate one hundred dollars yearly, from the income of the faculty, as a sinking fund.

¹ "Commons" in this instance included lodging, as well as board.

In January, 1825, the too sanguine hopes of the fathers of the college having been somewhat chilled by the coldness of some from whom they expected better things, it was voted, that, "whereas the trustees are without disposable funds for the payment of the salaries of the professors and lecturers, and the contingencies that do not relate to fixtures and apparatus, therefore, the said professors and lecturers must look for their compensation, and for the defrayment of incidental expenses, to the tuition of students;" the fees to be divided among the faculty, in such proportion as they might agree upon, with the right to appeal to the trustees in case of dissatisfaction.

It may well be imagined that the compensation thus derived was often meager; and the more so, that the fees were not unfrequently paid in notes of the students running for indefinite terms; the specification indeed often being, "when the said student shall be able to pay." These notes were duly distributed to the faculty, and many of them, which were left to await payment, were found at the dissolution of the Institution in the deserted office of the dean.

But small and uncertain as the income of the faculty was, it was several times subjected to a sort of forced loan guaranteed to be paid "when the trustees should be in funds for that purpose." Sixteen hundred dollars of this class of debts appeared in the report of 1835, of which four hundred and forty-four dollars were due to Doctor Batchelder, who was dismissed from his professorship in 1828; three hundred and four to Doctor Childs, and two hundred and fifty-eight to Professor Dewey. It does not appear when the trustees came to be in funds to liquidate these claims.

Such in brief is the story of the pecuniary management of the Berkshire Medical College during the first twenty years of its existence. Let us now see what its success was as a scientific school.

On the first of July, 1823, the trustees issued a pamphlet-circular in which they announced the following lecture-course to commence on the second Wednesday of September:

General Anatomy and Physiology, Dr. Jerome V. C. Smith of Boston.¹

¹ Afterwards well-known as the mayor of that city, and as an author. He married Miss Eliza, daughter of Major Henry C. Brown.

Surgery and Anatomy, and Physiology as subservient to the Theory and Practice of Medicine and Surgery, Dr. J. P. Batchelder.

Theory and Practice of Medicine, Dr. H. H. Childs.

Obstetrics, Dr. Asa Burbank.

Materia Medica and Pharmacy, Dr. John DeLa Mater, of Sheffield.

Chemistry, Botany, Mineralogy, Natural and Experimental Philosophy, Prof. Chester Dewey.

Medical Jurisprudence, by a lecturer to be named.

Reading terms were also promised, in which the same branches were to be taught with the exception of those in Professor Dewey's department.

The following table of fees was fixed: For all the lectures, \$40; yearly tuition, exclusive of lectures, \$50; graduation, \$12; for Professor Dewey's lectures on the natural sciences, \$6.

Students "destined for missionary labors" were admitted without charge.

Students were promised "access to an extensive library, a cabinet of minerals consisting of about one thousand specimens, and a museum of valuable anatomical preparations."

One drawback there was to the satisfaction with which the citizens of the town saw a medical college established among them, and especially on the very edge of their principal graveyard. It was the dread of the resurrecting propensities of the students. Those who live when wise and humane legislation has provided unobjectionable means for obtaining an abundant supply of anatomical subjects, can hardly realize the feeling which pervaded the community when the student found it almost, or entirely, impossible to become even moderately familiar with the structure of the human frame unless he resorted to the nocturnal robbery of neighboring graves.

There are many thrilling traditions originating in the popular excitement upon this subject, which in the cities and larger towns often led to fearful riots. In Berkshire there was hardly a village in which one or more graves had not been robbed.¹

¹ Mr. Timothy Hall—afterwards for many years a police-officer of Pittsfield, noted for courage, determination and coolness in danger—once, when a boy of sixteen years, passing a lonely grave-yard in a neighboring town, saw what appeared to be a white figure bowing to him. His first thought was to fly, but his better judgment told him that to do so was to become a ghost-coward for life; and, with such boldness as he could summon, he approached the mysterious object, which proved to be a shroud that some resurrectionists

In 1820—only two years before the foundation of the Medical College, Pittsfield was thrown into the most violent commotion by the discovery that the body of George Butler, Jr., a respectable young man, with numerous relatives, had been stolen from its grave. Young Butler died in November, 1819, and, during the ensuing winter, his mother constantly dreamed that his grave was empty; which may, perhaps, be accounted for by the fact that suspicion had been roused in the fall by the appearance of the sod, and the finding of a shroud-sleeve in the burial-ground, although we do not know that she was informed of these circumstances. But, however that may be, when, at her solicitation, one of her surviving sons, early in May, opened his brother's grave, and found that the body had been removed by the usual rude method, the mother's dream conspired with other circumstances to deepen the public horror. Almost every person in Pittsfield—men, women and children—as well as many from neighboring towns, went to gaze, shuddering, into the gaping grave, which was purposely left open all summer, exposing its shattered and tenantless coffin, to remind the spectator of the most shocking circumstances of its desecration.

A town-meeting was called on the 7th of June to consider the case, and to see what method should be taken to prevent in future "the horrid and savage practice" of body-stealing. At this meeting a committee—consisting of Henry C. Brown, Josiah Bisell, William C. Jarvis, Nathan Willis, and Dr. Timothy Childs—reported that, while they "viewed with abhorrence, the violations of the right of sepulcher," they could find no statute of the commonwealth regarding such an offense, and that, in their opinion, the town had no power to raise a tax for the purpose of offering a reward for the detection of the perpetrators. They might, however, be indicted for a misdemeanor at the common law, if

had torn from a recently disinterred body. In this case the coffin had been only partially uncovered and the corpse rudely dragged through a narrow aperture. This indeed was the common practice of the "body-snatchers," who were provided with an iron-hook, which, inserted under the chin of the corpse, enabled them with little trouble to draw from the coffin its tenant,—especially if, as was oftenest the case, he was emaciated by disease. This brutal treatment of the stolen subjects, even before the application of the dissecting knife, added greatly to the exasperation of the people, who were accustomed to look upon the dead with the most profound awe, and upon the remains of their friends and neighbors with the most tender reverence.

they could be detected by the activity and vigilance of private citizens. Somewhat astounded by this exposition of the law, the town instructed the selectmen to "lay the facts before the governor and council, and request them to take such order thereon as they might deem proper ;" but, if they did so, it had no effect, for the first Massachusetts statute for the protection of the repose of the dead was not passed until 1830.

The town further appointed a committee of twelve to collect subscriptions, in order to offer a reward for the detection of any person who had violated or might violate any grave in the town ; and also directed Josiah Bissell, whose store adjoined the central burial-ground, to view it occasionally to see whether there were any indications that it had been disturbed.

These occurrences are still vivid in the memory of the elder citizens of Pittsfield ; and, as late as 1870, Mr. James Butler, in a debate regarding the removal of the remains of the dead from the First street burial-ground to the new cemetery, alluded with the deepest feeling to the painful memories regarding his brother, which had, for fifty years, haunted him and other relatives.

In 1822, the facts we have stated, were fresh in the minds of the whole community, and it was with good reason that the trustees of the Medical College, in their first circular, strove to allay the apprehensions naturally excited by the location of their institution. "That the repose of the dead had been disturbed" they did not deny ; but such outrages had arisen from lack of a seminary where students could pursue anatomical researches chiefly. Compelled by law to obtain a competent knowledge of anatomy, and unable to meet the expense of city-schools, they were driven to expedients as repugnant to their own feelings as they were odious to the public. The new school, therefore, increased rather than diminished the security of the grave-yards.

The trustees even paid great regard to the feeling of "those many individuals of excellent minds who entertained prejudices against the dissection of the human frame" at all, and suggested for their relief that "the great number of anatomical preparations in the museum lessened the necessity for extensive dissection." They even went so far as to add that "comparative anatomy, or the dissection of brute-animals, furnished a substitute for the use of the human body, which would neither be overlooked nor neglected ;" which looks very much as though the

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